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ANATOLE FRANCE

THE MERRIE TALES OF JACQUES TOURNEBROCHE

A TRANSLATION BY

ALFRED ALLINSON

JOCASTA & THE FAMISHED CAT

A TRANSLATION BY

AGNES FARLEY

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CONTENTS

THE MERRIE TALES OF JACQUES TOURNEBROCHE

PAGE

Olivier's Brag 9
The Miracle of the Magpie 27
Brother Joconde 55
Five Fair Ladies of Picardy, of Poitou, of Touraine, of Lyons, and of Paris 83
A Good Lesson well Learnt 91
Satan's Tongue-Pie 105
Concerning an Horrible Picture . . . 109
Mademoiselle de Doucine's New Year's Present 117
Mademoiselle Roxane 129

CHILD LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

Fanchon 159
The Fancy-Dress Ball 172
The School 175
Marie 179
The Pandean Pipes 182
Roger's Stud 185
Courage 187

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PAGE

Catherine's "At Home" 190
Little Sea-Dogs 193
Getting Well 196
Across the Meadows 199
The March Past 208
Dead Leaves 211
Suzanne 214
Fishing 217
The Penalties of Greatness 220
A Child's Dinner Party 223
The Artist 226
Jacqueline and Miraut 229

OLIVIER'S BRAG

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THE Emperor Charlemagne and his twelve peers, having taken the palmer's staff at Saint-Denis, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They prostrated themselves before the tomb of Our Lord, and sat in the thirteen chairs of the great hall wherein Jesus Christ and his Apostles met together to celebrate the blessed sacrifice of the Mass. Then they fared to Constantinople, being fain to see King Hugo, who was renowned for his magnificence.

The King welcomed them in his Palace, where, beneath a golden dome, birds of ruby, wrought with a wondrous art, sat and sang in bushes of emerald.

He seated the Emperor of France and the twelve Counts about a table loaded with stags, boars, cranes, wild geese, and peacocks, served

in pepper. And he offered his guests, in ox-horns, the wines of Greece and Asia to drink. Charlemagne and his companions quaffed all these wines in honour of the King and his daughter, the Princess Helen. After supper Hugo led them to the chamber where they were to sleep. Now this chamber was circular, and a column, springing in the midst thereof, carried the vaulted roof. Nothing could be finer to look upon. Against the walls, which were hung with gold and purple, twelve beds were ranged, while another greater than the rest stood beside the pillar.

Charlemagne lay in this, and the Counts stretched themselves round about him on the others. The wine they had drunk ran hot in their veins, and their brains were afire. They could not sleep, and fell to making brags instead, and laying of wagers, as is the way of the knights of France, each striving to outdo the other in warranting himself to do some doughty deed for to manifest his prowess. The Emperor opened the game. He said:

"Let them fetch me, a-horseback and fully armed, the best knight King Hugo hath. I

will lift my sword and bring it down upon him in such wise it shall cleave helm and hauberk, saddle and steed, and the blade shall delve a foot deep underground."

Guillaume d'Orange spake up after the Emperor and made the second brag.

"I will take," said he, "a ball of iron sixty men can scarce lift, and hurl it so mightily against the Palace wall that it shall beat down sixty fathoms' length thereof."

Ogier, the Dane, spake next.

"Ye see yon proud pillar which bears up the vault. To-morrow will I tear it down and break it like a straw."

After which Renaud de Montauban cried with an oath:

"'Od's life! Count Ogier, whiles you overset the pillar, I will clap the dome on my shoulders and hale it down to the seashore."

Gérard de Rousillon it was made the fifth brag.

He boasted he would uproot single-handed, in one hour, all the trees in the Royal pleasaunce.

Aïmer took up his parable when Gérard was done.

"I have a magic hat," said he, "made of a sea-calf's skin, which renders me invisible. I will set it on my head, and to-morrow, whenas King Hugo is seated at meat, I will eat up his fish and drink down his wine, I will tweak his nose and buffet his ears. Not knowing whom or what to blame, he will clap all his serving-men in gaol and scourge them sore, — and we shall laugh."

"For me," declared Huon de Bordeaux, whose turn it was, "for me, I am so nimble I will trip up to the King and cut off his beard and eyebrows without his knowing aught about the matter. 'T is a piece of sport I will show you to-morrow. And I shall have no need of a sea-calf hat either!"

Doolin de Mayence made his brag too. He promised to eat up in one hour all the figs and all the oranges and all the lemons in the King's orchards.

Next the Duc Naisme said in this wise:

"By my faith! *I* will go into the banquet hall, I will catch up flagons and cups of gold and fling them so high they will never light down again save to tumble into the moon."

Bernard de Brabant then lifted his great voice:

"I will do better yet," he roared. "Ye know the river that flows by Constantinople is broad and deep, for it is come nigh its mouth by then, after traversing Egypt, Babylon, and the Earthly Paradise. Well, I will turn it from its bed and make it flood the Great Square of the City."

Gérard de Viane said:

"Put a dozen knights in line of array. And I will tumble all the twelve on their noses, only by the wind of my sword."

It was the Count Roland laid the twelfth wager, in the fashion following:

"I will take my horn, I will go forth of the city and I will blow such a blast all the gates of the town will drop from their hinges."

Olivier alone had said no word yet. He was young and courteous, and the Emperor loved him dearly.

"Olivier, my son," he asked, "will you not make your brag like the rest of us?"

"Right willingly, sire," Olivier replied.

"Do you know the name of Hercules of Greece?"

"Yea, I have heard some discourse of him," said Charlemagne. "He was an idol of the misbelievers, like the false god Mahound."

"Not so, sire," said Olivier. "Hercules of Greece was a knight among the Pagans and King of a Pagan kingdom. He was a gallant champion and stoutly framed in all his limbs. Visiting the Court of a certain Emperor who had fifty daughters, virgins, he wedded them all on one and the same night, and that so well and throughly that next morning they all avowed themselves well-contented women and with naught left to learn. He had not slighted ever a one of them. Well, sire, an you will, I will lay my wager to do after the fashion of Hercules of Greece."

"Nay, beware, Olivier, my son," cried the Emperor, "beware what you do; the thing would be a sin. I felt sure this King Hercules was a Saracen!"

"Sire," returned Olivier, "know this — I warrant me to show in the same space of time the selfsame prowess with one virgin that Her-

cules of Greece did with fifty. And the maid shall be none other but the Princess Helen, King Hugo's daughter."

"Good and well," agreed Charlemagne; "that will be to deal honestly and as a good Christian should. But you were in the wrong, my son, to drag the fifty virgins of King Hercules into your business, wherein, the Devil fly away with me else, I can see but one to be concerned."

"Sire," answered Olivier mildly, "there is but one of a truth. But she shall win such satisfaction of me that, an I number the tokens of my love, you will to-morrow see fifty crosses scored on the wall, and that is *my* brag."

The Count Olivier was yet speaking when lo! the column which bare the vault opened. The pillar was hollow and contrived in such sort that a man could lie hid therein at his ease to see and hear everything. Charlemagne and the twelve Counts had never a notion of this; so they were sore surprised to behold the King of Constantinople step forth. He was white with anger and his eyes flashed fire.

He said in a terrible voice:

"So this is how ye show your gratitude for the hospitality I offer you. Ye are ill-mannered guests. For a whole hour have ye been insulting me with your bragging wagers. Well, know this, — you, Sir Emperor, and ye, his knights; if to-morrow ye do not all of you make good your boasts, I will have your heads cut off."

Having said his say, he stepped back within the pillar, which shut to again closely behind him. For a while the twelve paladins were dumb with wonder and consternation. The Emperor was the first to break the silence.

"Comrades," he said, "'t is true we have bragged too freely. Mayhap we have spoken things better unsaid. We have drunk overmuch wine, and have shown unwisdom. The chiefest fault is mine; I am your Emperor, and I gave you the bad example. I will devise with you to-morrow of the means whereby we may save us from this perilous pass; meantime, it behoves us to get to sleep. I wish you a good night. God have you in his keeping!"

A moment later the Emperor and the twelve

peers were snoring under their coverlets of silk and cloth of gold.

They awoke on the morrow, their minds still distraught and deeming the thing was but a nightmare. But anon soldiers came to lead them to the Palace, that they might make good their brags before the King's face.

"Come," cried the Emperor, "come; and let us pray God and His Holy Mother. By Our Lady's help shall we easily make good our brags."

He marched in front with a more than human majesty of port. Arriving anon at the King's Palace, Charlemagne, Naisme, Aïmer, Huon, Doolin, Guillaume, Ogier, Bernard, Renaud, the two Gérards, and Roland fell on their knees and, joining their hands in prayer, made this supplication to the Holy Virgin:

"Lady, which art in Paradise, look on us now in our extremity; for love of the Realm of the Lilies, which is thine own, protect the Emperor of France and his twelve peers, and give them the puissance to make good their brags."

Thereafter they rose up comforted and fulfilled of bright courage and gallant confidence, for they knew that Our Lady would answer their prayer.

King Hugo, seated on a golden throne, accosted them, saying:

"The hour is come to make good your brags. But an if ye fail so to do, I will have your heads cut off. Begone therefore, straightway, escorted by my men-at-arms, each one of you to the place meet for the doing of the fine things ye have insolently boasted ye will accomplish."

At this order they separated and went divers ways, each followed by a little troop of armed men. Whiles some returned to the hall where they had passed the night, others betook them to the gardens and orchards. Bernard de Brabant made for the river, Roland hied him to the ramparts, and all marched valiantly. Only Olivier and Charlemagne tarried in the Palace, waiting, the one for the knight that he had sworn to cleave in twain, the other for the maiden he was to wed.

But in very brief while a fearful sound arose,

awful as the last trump that shall proclaim to mankind the end of the world. It reached the Great Hall of the Palace, set the birds of ruby trembling on their emerald perches and shook King Hugo on his throne of gold.

'T was a noise of walls crumbling into ruin and floods roaring, and high above the din blared out an ear-splitting trumpet blast. Meanwhile messengers had come hurrying in from all quarters of the city, and thrown themselves trembling at the King's feet, bearing strange and terrible tidings.

"Sire," said one, "sixty fathoms' length of the city walls is fallen in at one crash."

"Sire," cried another, "the pillar which bare up your vaulted hall is broken down, and the dome thereof we have seen walking like a tortoise toward the sea."

"Sire," faltered a third, "the river, with its ships and its fishes, is pouring through the streets, and will soon be beating against your Palace walls."

King Hugo, white with terror, muttered:

"By my faith! these men are wizards."

"Well, Sir King," Charlemagne addressed

him with a smile on his lips, "the Knight I wait for is long of coming."

The King sent for him, and he came. He was a knight of stately stature and well armed. The good Emperor clave him in twain, as he had said.

Now while these things were a-doing, Olivier thought to himself:

"The intervention of Our Most Blessed Lady is plain to see in these marvels; and I am rejoiced to behold the manifest tokens she vouchsafes of her love for the Realm of France. Not in vain have the Emperor and his companions implored the succour of the Holy Virgin, Mother of God. Alas! *I* shall pay for all the rest, and have my head cut off. For I cannot well ask the Virgin Mary to help me make good *my* brag. 'Tis an enterprise of a sort wherein 't would be indiscreet to crave the interference of Her who is the *Lily of Purity*, the *Tower of Ivory*, the *Guarded Door* and the *Fenced Orchard-Close*. And, lacking aid from on high, I am sore afraid I may not do so much as I have said."

Thus ran Olivier's thoughts, when King Hugo roughly accosted him with the words:

"'T is now your turn, Count, to fulfil your promise."

"Sire," replied Olivier, "I am waiting with great impatience for the Princess your daughter. For you must needs do me the priceless grace of giving me her hand."

"That is but fair," said King Hugo. "I will therefore bid her come to you and a chaplain with her for to celebrate the marriage."

At church, during the ceremony, Olivier reflected:

"The maid is sweet and comely as ever a man could desire, and too fain am I to clip her in my arms to regret the brag I have made."

That evening, after supper, the Princess Helen and the Count Olivier were escorted by twelve ladies and twelve knights to a chamber, wherein the twain were left alone together.

There they passed the night, and on the morrow guards came and led them both before King Hugo. He was on his throne,

surrounded by his knights. Near by stood Charlemagne and the peers.

"Well, Count Olivier," demanded the King, "is your brag made good?"

Olivier held his peace, and already was King Hugo rejoiced at heart to think his new son-in-law's head must fall. For of all the brags and boasts, it was Olivier's had angered him worst.

"Answer," he stormed. "Do you dare to tell me your brag is accomplished?"

Thereupon the Princess Helen, blushing and smiling, spake with eyes downcast and in a faint voice, yet clear withal, and said, — "Yea!"

Right glad were Charlemagne and the peers to hear the Princess say this word.

"Well, well," said Hugo, "these Frenchmen have God and the Devil o' their side. It was fated I should cut off none of these knights' heads. . . . Come hither, son-in-law," — and he stretched forth his hand to Olivier, who kissed it.

The Emperor Charlemagne embraced the Princess and said to her:

"Helen, I hold you for my daughter and my son's wife. You will go along with us to France, and you will live at our Court."

Then, as his lips lay on the Princess's cheek, he rounded softly in her ear:

"You spake as a loving-hearted woman should. But tell me this in closest confidence, — Did you speak the truth?"

She answered:

"Sire, Olivier is a gallant man and a courteous. He was so full of pretty ways and dainty devices for to distract my mind, *I* never thought of counting. Nor yet did *he* keep score. Needs therefore must I hold him quit of his promise."

King Hugo made great rejoicings for his daughter's nuptials. Thereafter Charlemagne and his twelve peers returned back to France, taking with them the Princess Helen.

THE MIRACLE OF THE MAGPIE

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I

ENT, of the year 1429, presented a strange marvel of the Calendar, a conjunction that moved the admiration not only of the common crowd of the Faithful, but eke of Clerks, well learned in Arithmetic. For Astronomy, mother of the Calendar, was Christian in those days. In 1429 Good Friday fell on the Feast of the Annunciation, so that one and the same day combined the commemoration of the two several mysteries which did commence and consummate the redemption of mankind, and in wondrous wise superimposed one on top of the other, Jesus conceived in the Virgin's womb and Jesus dying on the Cross. This Friday, whereon the mystery of joy came so to coincide exactly with the mystery of

sorrow, was named the "Grand Friday," and was kept holy with solemn Feasts on Mount Anis, in the Church of the Annunciation. For many years, by gift of the Popes of Rome, the sanctuary of Mount Anis had possessed the privilege of the plenary indulgences of a great jubilee, and the late-deceased Bishop of Le Puy, Élie de Lestrange, had gotten Pope Martin to restore this *pardon*. It was a favour of the sort the Popes scarce ever refused, when asked in due and proper form.

The *pardon* of the Grand Friday drew a great crowd of pilgrims and traders to Le Puy-en-Velay. As early as mid February folk from distant lands set out thither in cold and wind and rain. For the most part they fared on foot, staff in hand. Whenever they could, these pilgrims travelled in companies, to the end they might not be robbed and held to ransom by the armed bands that infested the country parts, and by the barons who exacted toll on the confines of their lands. Inasmuch as the mountain districts were especially dangerous, they tarried in

the neighbouring towns, Clermont, Issoire, Brioude, Lyons, Issingeaux, Alais, till they were gathered in a great host, and then went forth on their road in the snow. During Holy Week a strange multitude thronged the hilly streets of Le Puy, — pedlars from Languedoc and Provence and Catalonia, leading their mules laded with leather goods, oil, wool, webs of cloth, or wines of Spain in goat-skins; lords a-horseback and ladies in wains, artisans and traders pacing on their mules, with wife or daughter perched behind. Then came the poor pilgrim folk, limping along, halting and hobbling, stick in hand and bag on back, panting up the stiff climb. Last were the flocks of oxen and sheep being driven to the slaughter-houses.

Now, leant against the wall of the Bishop's palace, stood Florent Guillaume, looking as long and dry and black as an espalier vine in winter, and devoured pilgrims and cattle with his eyes.

"Look," he called to Marguerite the lace-maker, "look at yonder fine heads of bestial."

And Marguerite, squatted beside her bobbins, called back:

"Yea, fine beasts, and fat withal!"

Both the twain were very bare and scant of the goods of this world, and even then were feeling bitterly the pinch of hunger. And folk said it came of their own fault. At that very moment Pierre Grandmange the tripe-seller was saying as much, where he stood in his tripe-shop, pointing a finger at them. "'T would be sinful," he was crying, "to give an alms to such good-for-nothing varlets." The tripe-seller would fain have been very charitable, but he feared to lose his soul by giving to evil-livers, and all the fat citizens of Le Puy had the selfsame scruples.

To say truth, we must needs allow that, in the heyday of her hot youth, Marguerite the lace-maker had not matched St. Lucy in purity, St. Agatha in constancy, and St. Catherine in staidness. As for Florent Guillaume, he had been the best scrivener in the city. For years he had not had his equal for engrossing the Hours of Our Lady of Le Puy. But he had been over fond of merrymakings and

junketings. Now his hand had lost its cunning, and his eye its clearness; he could no more trace the letters on the parchment with the needful steadiness of touch. Even so, he might have won his livelihood by teaching apprentices in his shop at the sign of the Image of Our Lady, under the choir buttresses of *The Annunciation*, for he was a fellow of good counsel and experience. But having had the ill fortune to borrow of Maître Jacquet Coquedouille the sum of six livres ten sous, and having paid him back at divers terms eighty livres two sous, he had found himself at the last to owe yet six livres two sous to the account of his creditor, which account was approved correct by the judges, for Jacquet Coquedouille was a sound arithmetician. This was the reason why the scrivenry of Florent Guillaume, under the choir buttresses of *The Annunciation*, was sold, on Saturday the fifth day of March, being the Feast of St. Theophilus, to the profit of Maître Jacquet Coquedouille. Since that time the poor penman had never a place to call his own. But by the good help of Jean Magne the

bell-ringer and with the protection of Our Lady, whose Hours he had aforetime written, Florent Guillaume found a perch o' nights in the steeple of the Cathedral.

The scrivener and the lace-maker had much ado to live. Marguerite only kept body and soul together by chance and charity, for she had long lost her good looks and she hated the lace-making. They helped each other. Folks said so by way of reproach; they had been better advised to account it to them for righteousness. Florent Guillaume was a learned clerk. Well knowing every word of the history of the beautiful Black Virgin of Le Puy and the ordering of the ceremonies of the great *pardon*, he had conceived the notion he might serve as guide to the pilgrims, deeming he would surely light on someone compassionate enough to pay him a supper in guerdon of his fine stories. But the first folk he had offered his services to had bidden him begone because his ragged coat bespoke neither good guidance nor clerkly wit; so he had come back, downhearted and crestfallen, to the Bishop's wall, where he had his bit of sunshine and

his kind gossip Marguerite. "They reckon," he said bitterly, "I am not learned enough to number them the relics and recount the miracles of Our Lady. Do they think my wits have escaped away through the holes in my gaberdine?"

"'T is not the wits," replied Marguerite, "escape by the holes in a body's clothes, but the good natural heat. I am sore a-cold. And it is but too true that, man and woman, they judge us by our dress. The gallants would find me comely enough yet if I was accoutred like my Lady the Comtesse de Clermont."

Meanwhile, all the length of the street in front of them the pilgrims were elbowing and fighting their way to the Sanctuary, where they were to win pardon for their sins.

"They will surely suffocate anon," said Marguerite. "Twenty-two years agone, on the Grand Friday, two hundred persons died stifled under the porch of *The Annunciation.* God have their souls in keeping! Ay, those were the good times, when I was young!"

"'T is very true indeed, that year you tell of, two hundred pilgrims crushed each other

to death and departed from this world to the other. And next day was never a sign to be seen of aught untoward."

As he so spake, Florent Guillaume noted a pilgrim, a very fat man, who was not hurrying to get him assoiled with the same hot haste as the rest, but kept rolling his wide eyes to right and left with a look of distress and fear. Florent Guillaume stepped up to him and louted low.

"Messire," he accosted him, "one may see at a glance you are a sensible man and an experienced; you do not rush blindly to the *pardon* like a sheep to the slaughter. The rest of the folk go helter-skelter thither, the nose of one under the tail of the other; but you follow a wiser fashion. Grant me the boon to be your guide, and you will not repent your bargain."

The pilgrim, who proved to be a gentleman of Limoges, answered in the patois of his countryside, that he had no use for a scurvy beggarman and could very well find his own way to *The Annunciation* for to receive pardon for his faults. And therewith he set his face

resolutely to the hill. But Florent Guillaume cast himself at his feet, and tearing at his hair:

"Stop! stop! messire," he cried; "i' God's name and by all the Saints, I warn you go no farther! 'T will be your death, and you are not the man we could see perish without grief and dolour. A few steps more and you are a dead man! They are suffocating up yonder. Already full six hundred pilgrims have given up the ghost. And this is but a small beginning! Do you not know, messire, that twenty-two years agone, in the year of grace one thousand four hundred and seven, on the selfsame day and at the selfsame hour, under yonder porch, nine thousand six hundred and thirty-eight persons, without reckoning women and children, trampled each other underfoot and perished miserably? An you met the same fate, I should never smile again. To see you is to love you, messire; to know you is to conceive a sudden and overmastering desire to serve you."

The Limousin gentleman had halted in no small surprise and turned pale to hear such discourse and see the fellow tearing out his hair in fistfuls. In his terror he was for turn-

ing back the way he had come. But Florent Guillaume, on his knees in the mud, held him back by the skirt of his jacket.

"Never go that way, messire! not that way. You might meet Jacquet Coquedouille, and you would be all in an instant turned into stone. Better encounter the basilisk than Jacquet Coquedouille. I will tell you what you must do if, like the wise and prudent man your face proclaims you to be, you would live long and make your peace with God. Hearken to me; I am a scholar, a Bachelor. To-day the holy relics will be borne through the streets and crossways of the city. You will find great solace in touching the carven shrines which enclose the cornelian cup wherefrom the child Jesus drank, one of the wine-jars of the Marriage at Cana, the cloth of the Last Supper, and the holy foreskin. If you take my advice, we will go wait for them, under cover, at a cookshop I wot of, before which they will pass without fail."

Then, in a wheedling voice, without loosing his hold of the pilgrim's jacket, he pointed to the lace-maker and said:

"Messire, you must give six sous to yonder worthy woman, that she may go buy us wine, for she knows where good liquor is to be gotten."

The Limousin gentleman, who was a simple soul after all, went where he was led, and Florent Guillaume supped on the leg and wing of a goose, the bones whereof he put in his pocket as a present for Madame Ysabeau, his fellow lodger in the timbers of the steeple, — to wit, Jean Magne the bell-ringer's magpie.

He found her that night perched on the beam where she was used to roost, beside the hole in the wall which was her storeroom wherein she hoarded walnuts and hazel-nuts, almonds and beech-nuts. She had awoke at the noise of his coming and flapped her wings; so he greeted her very courteously, addressing her in these obliging terms:

"Magpie most pious, lady recluse, bird of the cloister, Margot of the Nunnery, sable-frocked Abbess, Church fowl of the lustrous coat, all hail!"

Then offering her the goose bones nicely folded in a cabbage leaf:

"Lady," he said, "I bring you here the scraps remaining of a good dinner a gentleman from Limoges gave me. His countrymen are radish eaters; but I have taught this one to prefer an Anis goose to all the radishes in the Limousin."

Next day and the rest of the week Florent Guillaume, — for he could never light on his fat friend again nor yet any other good pilgrim with a well-lined travelling wallet, — fasted *a solis ortu usque ad occasum*, from rising sun to dewy eve. Marguerite the lace-maker did likewise. This was very meet and right, seeing the time was Holy Week.

II

OW on Holy Easter Day, Maître Jacquet Coquedouille, a notable citizen of the place, was peeping through a hole in a shutter of his house and watching the countless throng of pilgrims passing down the steep street. They were wending homewards, happy to have won their pardon; and the sight of them greatly magnified his veneration for the Black Virgin. For he deemed a lady so much sought after must needs be a puissant dame. He was old, and his only hope lay in God's mercy. Yet was he but ill-assured of his eternal salvation, for he remembered how many a time he had ruthlessly fleeced the widow and the orphan. Moreover, he had robbed Florent Guillaume of his scrivenry at the sign of Our Lady. He was used to lend at high interest on sound security. Yet could

no man infer he was a usurer, forasmuch as he was a Christian, and it was only the Jews practised usury, — the Jews, and, if you will, the Lombards and the men of Cahors.

Now Jacquet Coquedouille went about the matter quite otherwise than the Jews. He never said, like Jacob, Ephraim, and Manasses, "I am lending you money." What he did say was, "I am putting money into your business to help your trafficking," a different thing altogether. For usury and lending upon interest were forbidden by the Church, but trafficking was lawful and permitted.

And yet at the thought how he had brought many Christian folk to poverty and despair, Jacquet Coquedouille felt the pangs of remorse, as he pictured the sword of Divine Justice hanging over his head. So on this holy Easter Day he was fain to secure him against the Last Judgment by winning the protection of Our Lady. He thought to himself she would plead for him at the judgment seat of her divine Son, if only he gave her a handsome fee. So he went to the great chest where he kept his gold, and, after mak-

ing sure the chamber door was shut fast, he opened the chest, which was full of angels, florins, esterlings, nobles, gold crowns, gold ducats, and golden sous, and all the coins ever struck by Christian or Saracen. He extracted with a sigh of regret twelve deniers of fine gold and laid them on the table, which was crowded with balances, files, scissors, gold-scales, and account books. After shutting his chest again and triple-locking it, he numbered the deniers, renumbered them, gazed long at them with looks of affection, and addressed them in words so soft and sweet, so affable and ingratiating, so gentle and courteous, it seemed rather the music of the spheres than human speech.

"Oh, little angels!" sighed the good old man. "Oh, my dear little angels! Oh, my pretty gold sheep, with the fine, precious fleece!"

And taking the pieces between his fingers with as much reverence as it had been the body of Our Lord, he put them in the balance and made sure they were of the full weight, — or very near, albeit a trifle clipped

already by the Lombards and the Jews, through whose hands they had passed. After which he spoke to them yet more graciously than before:

"Oh, my pretty sheep, my sweet, pretty lambs, there, let me shear you! 'T will do you no hurt at all."

Then, seizing his great scissors, he clipped off shreds of gold here and there, as he was used to clip every piece of money before parting with it. And he gathered the clippings carefully in a wooden bowl that was already half full of bits of gold. He was ready to give twelve angels to the Holy Virgin; but he felt no way bound to depart from his use and wont. This done, he went to the aumry where his pledges lay, and drew out a little blue purse, broidered with silver, which a dame of the petty trading sort had left with him in her distress. He remembered that blue and white are Our Lady's colours.

That day and the next he did nothing further. But in the night, betwixt Monday and Tuesday, he had cramps, and dreamt the devils were pulling him by the feet. This he

took for a warning of God and our Blessed Lady, tarried within doors pondering the matter all the day, and then toward evening went to lay his offering at the feet of the Black Virgin.

III

THAT same day, as night was closing in, Florent Guillaume thought ruefully of returning to his airy bedchamber. He had fasted the livelong day, sore against the grain, holding that a good Christian ought not to fast in the glorious Resurrection week. Before mounting to his bed in the steeple, he went to offer a pious prayer to the Lady of Le Puy. She was still there in the midst of the Church at the spot where she had offered herself on the Grand Friday to the veneration of the Faithful. Small and black, crowned with jewels, in a mantle blazing with gold and precious stones and pearls, she held on her knees the Child Jesus, who was as black as his mother and passed his head through a slit in her cloak. It was the miraculous image which St. Louis had received as a

gift from the Soldan of Egypt and had carried with his own hands to the Church of Anis.

All the pilgrims were gone now, and the Church was dark and empty. The last offerings of the Faithful were spread at the feet of the beautiful Black Virgin, displayed on a table lit with wax tapers. You could see amongst the rest a head, hearts, hands, feet, a woman's breasts of silver, a little boat of gold, eggs, loaves, Aurillac cheeses, and in a bowl full of deniers, sous, and groats, a little blue purse broidered with silver. Over against the table, in a huge chair, dozed the priest who guarded the offerings.

Florent Guillaume dropped on his knees before the holy image, and said over to himself this pious prayer:

"Lady, an it be true that the holy prophet Jeremias, having beheld thee with the eyes of faith ere ever thou wast conceived, carved with his hands out of cedar-wood in thy likeness the holy image before which I am at this present kneeling; an it be true that afterward King Ptolemy, instructed of the miracles wrought by this same holy image, took it from

the Jewish priests, bare it to Egypt and set it up, covered with precious stones, in the temple of the idols; an it be true that Nebuchadnezzar, conqueror of the Egyptians, seized it in his turn and had it laid amongst his treasure, where the Saracens found it when they captured Babylon; an it be true that the Soldan loved it in his heart above all things, and was used to adore it at the least once every day; an it be true that the said Soldan had never given it to our saintly King Louis, but that his wife, who was a Saracen dame, yet prized chivalry and knightly prowess, resolved to make it a gift to the best knight and worthiest champion of all Christendom; in a word, an this image be miraculous, as I do firmly credit, have it do a miracle, Lady, in favour of the poor clerk who hath many a time writ thy praises on the vellum of the service books. He hath sanctified his sinful hands by engrossing in a fair writing, with great red capitals at the beginning of each clause, 'the fifteen joys of Our Lady,' in the vulgar tongue and in rhyme, for the comforting of the afflicted. 'T is pious work this. Think of

it, Lady, and heed not his sins. Give him somewhat to eat. 'T will both do me much profit, and bring thee great honour, for the miracle will appear no mean one to all them that know the world. Thou hast this day gotten gold, eggs, cheeses, and a little blue purse broidered with silver. Lady, I grudge thee none of the gifts that have been made thee. Thou dost well deserve them, yea, and more than they. I do not so much as ask thee to make them give me back what a thief hath robbed me of, a thief by name Jacquet Coquedouille, one of the most honoured citizens of this thy town of Le Puy. No, all I ask of thee is not to let me die of hunger. And if thou grant me this boon, I will indite a full and fair history of thine holy image here present."

So prayed Florent Guillaume. The soft murmur of his petition was answered only by the deep-chested, placid snore of the sleeping priest. The poor scrivener rose from his knees, stepped noiselessly adown the nave, for he was grown so light his footfall could scarce be heard, and, fasting as he was, climbed the

tower stairs that had as many steps as there are days in the year.

Meanwhile Madame Ysabeau, slipping under the cloister gate, entered her Church. The pilgrims had driven her away, for she loved peace and solitude. The bird came forward cautiously, putting one foot slowly in front of the other, then stopped and craned her neck, casting a suspicious look to right and left. Then giving a graceful little jump and shaking out her tail feathers, she hopped up to the Black Madonna. Then she stood stock still a few moments, scrutinising the sleeping watchman and questioning the darkness and silence with eyes and ears alert. At last with a mighty flutter of wings she alighted on the table of offerings.

IV

MEANWHILE Florent Guillaume had settled himself for the night in the steeple. It was bitter cold. The wind came blowing in through the luffer-boards and fluted and organed among the bells to rejoice the heart of the cats and owls. And this was not the only objection to the lodging. Since the earthquake of 1427, which had shaken the whole church, the spire was dropping to pieces stone by stone and threatened to collapse altogether in the first storm. Our Lady suffered this dilapidation because of the people's sins.

Presently Florent Guillaume fell asleep, which is a token of his innocency of heart. What dreams he dreamt is clean forgot, except that he had a vision in his sleep of a lady of consummate beauty who came and kissed

him on the mouth. But when his lips opened to return her salute, he swallowed two or three woodlice that were walking over his face and by their tickling had deluded his sleeping senses into the agreeable fancy. He awoke, and hearing a noise of wings beating above his head, he thought it was a devil, as was very natural for him to opine, seeing how the evil spirits flock in countless swarms to torment mankind, and above all at night time. But the moon just then breaking through the clouds, he recognised Madame Ysabeau and saw she was busy with her beak pushing into a crack in the wall that served her for storehouse a blue purse broidered with silver. He let her do as she list; but when she had left her hoard, he clambered onto a beam, took the purse, opened it, and saw it contained twelve good gold deniers, which he clapped in his belt, giving thanks to the incomparable Black Virgin of Le Puy. For he was a clerk and versed in the Scriptures, and he remembered how the Lord fed his prophet Elias by a raven; whence he inferred that the Holy Mother of God had sent by a

magpie twelve deniers to her poor penman, Florent Guillaume.

On the morrow Florent and Marguerite the lace-maker ate a dish of tripe, — a treat they had craved for many a long year.

So ends the Miracle of the Magpie. May he who tells the tale live, as he would fain live, in good and gentle peace, and all good hap befall such folk as shall read the same.

BROTHER JOCONDE

BROTHER JOCONDE

THE Parisians were far from loving the English and found it hard to put up with them. When, after the obsequies of the late King Charles VI, the Duke of Bedford had the sword of the King of France borne before him, the people murmured. But what cannot be cured must be endured. Besides, though the capital hated the English, it loved the Burgundians. What more natural for citizen folk, and especially for money-changers and traders, than to admire Duke Philip, a prince of seemly presence and the richest nobleman in Christendom. As for the "little King of Bourges," a sorry-looking mortal and very poor, strongly suspected, moreover, of foul murder at the Bridge of Montereau, what had he about him to please folk withal? Scorn was the sentiment felt for him,

and horror and loathing for his partisans. For ten years now had these been riding and raiding around the walls, pillaging and holding to ransom. No doubt the English and Burgundians did much the same; when, in the month of August, 1423, Duke Philip came to Paris, his men-at-arms had ravaged all the country about. And they were friends and allies of course; but after all they only came and went. The Armagnacs, on the contrary, were always in the field, stealing whatever they could lay their hands upon, firing farmsteads and churches, killing women and children, deflowering virgins and nuns, hanging men by the thumbs. In 1420 they threw themselves like devils let loose on the village of Champigny and burnt up altogether oats, wheat, lambs, cows, oxen, children, and women. They did the like and worse at Croissy. A very great clerk of the University declared they wrought all wickedness that can be wrought and conceived, and that more Christian folk had been martyred at their hands than ever Maximian or Diocletian did to death.

At the news that these accursed Armagnacs

were at the gates of Compiègne and occupying the neighbouring castles and their lands, the folk of Paris were sore afraid. They believed that the Dauphin's soldiers had sworn, if they entered Paris, to slay whomsoever they found there. They affirmed openly that Messire Charles de Valois had given up to his men's mercy town and townsmen, great and small, of every rank and condition, men and women, and that he proposed to drive the plough over the site of the city. The inhabitants mostly believed the tale; so they set the St. Andrew's cross on their coats, in token that they were of the party of the Burgundians. Their hatred was doubled, and their fears with it, when they learned that Brother Richard and the Maid Jeanne were at the head of King Charles' army. They knew nothing of the Maid save from the rumour of the victories she was reported to have won at Orleans. But they deemed she had vanquished the English by the Devil's aid, by means of spells and enchantments. The Masters of the University all said: "A creature in shape of a woman is with the Armagnacs. What it is, God knows!"

For Brother Richard, they knew him well. He had come to Paris before, and they had hearkened reverently to his sermons. He had even persuaded them to renounce those games of chance for which they had been used to forget meat and drink and the services of the Church. Now, at the tidings that Brother Richard was on foray with the Armagnacs and winning over for them by his well-hung tongue good towns like Troyes in Champagne, they called down on him the curse of God and his Saints. They tore out of their hats the leaden medals inscribed with the holy name of Jesus, which the good Brother had given them, and to show in what detestation they held him, resumed dice, bowls, draughts, and all other games they had renounced at his exhortation.

The city was strongly fortified, for in the days when King Jean was a prisoner of the English, the citizens of Paris, seeing the enemy in the heart of the Kingdom, had feared a siege and had hastened to put the walls in a state of defence. They had surrounded the place with moats and counter-moats. The

moats, on the left bank of the river, were dug at the foot of the walls forming the old circle of fortification. But on the right bank there were faubourgs, both extensive and well built, outside the walls and almost touching them. The new moats enclosed a part of these, and the Dauphin Charles, King Jean's son, afterward had a wall built along the line of them. Nevertheless there was some feeling of insecurity, for the Cathedral Chapter took measures to put the relics and treasure out of reach of the enemy.

Meantime, on Sunday, August 21st, a Cordelier, by name Brother Joconde, entered the town. He had made pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and was said, like Brother Vincent Ferrier and Brother Bernardino of Sienna, to have enjoyed by the abounding grace of God many revelations anent the forthcoming end of the world. He gave out that he would preach his first sermon to the Parisians on Tuesday following, St. Bartholomew's day, in the Cloister of "The Innocents." On the eve of that day more than six thousand persons spent the night in the Cloister. At the foot of the platform

wherefrom he was to preach, the women sat squatted on their heels, and amongst them Guillaumette Dyonis, who was blind from birth.

She was the child of an artisan who had been killed by the Burgundians in the woods of Boulogne-la-Grande. Her mother had been carried off by a Burgundian man-at-arms, and none knew what had become of her. Guillaumette was fifteen or sixteen years of age. She lived at "The Innocents" on what she made by spinning wool, at which trade there was not a better worker to be found in all the town. She went and came in the streets without the help of any and knew everything as well as those who can see. As she lived a good and holy life and fasted often, she was favoured with visions. In especial she had been accorded notable revelations by the Apostle St. John concerning the troubles that then beset the Kingdom of France. Now, as she was reciting her Hours at the foot of the platform, under the great Dance of Death, a woman called Simone la Bardine, who was seated on the ground beside her, asked her if the good Brother was not coming soon.

Guillaumette Dyonis could not see the tailed gown of green and the horned wimple which Simone la Bardine wore; yet she knew by instinct the woman was no honest dame. She felt a natural aversion for light women and the sort the soldiers called their sweethearts or "doxies," but it had been revealed to her that we should hold such in great pity and deal compassionately with them. Wherefore she answered Simone la Bardine gently:

"The good Father will come soon, please God. And we shall have no reason to regret having waited, for he is eloquent in prayer and his sermons turn the folk to devotion more even than those of Brother Richard, who spake in these Cloisters in the springtime. He knows more than any man living of the times that shall come and shall show us strange portents. I trow we shall gain great profit of his words."

"God grant it," sighed Simone la Bardine. "But are you not very sorry to be blind?"

"No. I wait to see God."

Simone la Bardine made her mantle into a cushion, and said:

"Life is all ups and downs. I live at the top of the Rue Saint-Antoine. 'T is the finest part of the city and the merriest, for the best hostelries are in the Place Baudet and thereabout. Before the Wars there was aye abundance there of hot cakes and fresh herrings and Auxerre wine by the tun. With the English famine entered the town. Now is there neither bread in the bin nor firewood on the hearth. One after other the Armagnacs and the Burgundians have drunk up all the wine, and there is naught left in the cellar but a little thin, sour cider and sloe-juice. Knights armed for the tourney, pilgrims with their cockle-shells and staves, traders with their chests full of knives and little service-books, where are they gone? They never come now to seek a lodging and good living in the Rue Saint-Antoine. But the wolves quit covert in the forests and prowl of nights in the faubourgs and devour little children."

"Put your trust in God," Guillaumette Dyonis answered her.

"Amen!" returned Simone la Bardine. "But I have not told you the worst. On the Thurs-

day before St. John's day, at three after midnight, two Englishmen came knocking at my door. Not knowing but they had come to rob me or break up my chests and coffers out of mischief, or do some other devilment, I shouted to them from my window to go their ways, that I did not know them and I was not going to open the door. But they only hammered louder, swearing they were going to break in the door and come in and cut off my nose and ears. To stop their uproar I emptied a crockful of water on their heads; but the crock slipped out of my hands and broke on the back of one fellow's neck so unchancily that it felled him. His comrade called up the watch. I was haled to the Châtelet and clapped in prison, where I was very hardly handled, and only escaped by paying a heavy sum of money. I found my house pillaged from cellar to attic. From that day my affairs have gone from bad to worse, and I have naught in the wide world but the clothes I stand up in. In very despair I have come hither to hear the good Father, who they say abounds in comforting words."

"God, who loves you," said Guillaumette Dyonis, "has moved you in all this."

Then a great silence fell on the crowd as Brother Joconde appeared. His eyes flashed like lightning. When he opened his lips, his voice pealed out like thunder.

"I have come from Jerusalem," he began; "and to prove it, see in this wallet are roses of Jericho, a branch of the olive under which Our Saviour sweated drops of blood, and a handful of the earth of Calvary."

He gave a long narrative of his pilgrimage. And he added:

"In Syria I met Jews travelling in companies; I asked them whither they were bound, and they told me: 'We are flocking in crowds to Babylon, because in very deed the Messiah is born among men, and will restore us our heritage, and stablish us again in the Land of Promise.' So said these Jews of Syria. Now the Scriptures teach us that he they call the Messiah is, in truth, Antichrist, of whom it is said he must be born at Babylon, chief city of the kingdom of Persia, be reared at Bethsaïda, and dwell in his youth at Chorazin. That is

why Our Lord said: 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaïda!'

"The year that is at hand," went on Brother Joconde, "will bring the greatest marvels that have ever been beheld.

"The times are at hand. He is born, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the wicked man, the beast from out the abyss, the abomination of desolation. He comes from the tribe of Dan, of which it is written: 'Dan shall be a serpent in the way, an adder in the path.'

"Brethren, soon shall ye see returning to this earth the Prophets Elias and Enoch, Moses, Jeremias, and St. John Evangelist. And lo! the day of wrath is dawning, the day which 'solvet sæclum in favilla, teste David et Sibylla.' Wherefore now is the time to repent and do penance and renounce the false delights of this world."

At the good Brother's word bosoms heaved with remorse and deep-drawn sighs were heard. Not a few, both men and women, were near fainting when the preacher cried:

"I read in your souls that ye keep man-

drakes at home, which will bring you to hell fire."

It was true. Many Parisians paid heavily to the old witch-wives, who profess unholy knowledge, for to buy mandrakes, and were used to keep them treasured in a chest. These magic roots have the likeness of a little man, hideously ugly and misshapen in a weird and diabolic fashion. They would dress them out magnificently, in fine linen and silks, and the mannikins brought them riches, chief source of all the ills of this world.

Next Brother Joconde thundered against women's extravagant attire.

"Leave off," he bade them, "your horns and your tails! Are ye not shamed so to bedizen yourselves like she-devils? Light bonfires, I say, in the public streets, and cast therein and burn your damnable head-gear, — pads and rolls, erections of leather and whalebone, wherewith ye stiffen out the front of your hoods."

He ended by exhorting them with so much zeal and loving-kindness not to lose

their souls, but put themselves in the grace of God, that all who heard him wept hot tears. And Simone la Bardine wept more abundantly than any.

When, finally, coming down from his platform, Brother Joconde crossed the cloister and graveyard, the people fell on their knees as he went by. The women gave him their little ones to bless, or besought him to touch medals and rosaries for them. Some plucked threads from his gown, thinking to get healing by putting them, like relics of the Saints, on the places where they were afflicted. Guillaumette Dyonis followed the good Father as easily as if she saw him with her bodily eyes. Simone la Bardine trailed behind her, sobbing. She had pulled off her horned wimple and tied a kerchief round her head.

Thus they marched, the three of them, along the streets, where men and women, who had been at the preaching, were kindling fires before their doors to cast therein head-gear and mandrake roots. But on reaching the river bank, Brother Joconde sat

down under an elm, and Guillaumette Dyonis came up to him and said:

"Father, it hath been revealed to me in vision that you are come to this Kingdom to restore the same to good peace and concord. I have had myself many revelations concerning the peace of the Kingdom."

Next Simone la Bardine took up her parable and said:

"Brother Joconde, I lived once in a fine house in the Rue Saint-Antoine, near by the Place Baudet, which is the fairest quarter of Paris, and the wealthiest. I had a matted chamber, mantles of cloth of gold, and gowns trimmed with miniver, enough to fill three great chests; I had a feather-bed, a dresser loaded with pewter, and a little book wherein you saw in pictures the story of Our Lord. But since the wars and pillagings that devastate the Kingdom, I have lost everything. The gallants never come now to take their pleasure in the Place Baudet. But the wolves come there instead to devour little children. The Burgundians and the English are as bad as the Armagnacs. Would you have me go with you?"

The Monk gazed a while in silence at the two women; and deeming it was Jesus Christ himself had led them to him, he received them for his Penitents, and thereafter the twain followed him wherever he went. Every day he preached to the people, now at "The Innocents," now at the Porte Saint-Honoré, or at the Halles. But he never went outside the Walls, by reason of the Armagnacs, who were raiding all the countryside round the city.

His words led many souls to a better life; and at the fourth sermon he preached in Paris, he received for Penitents Jeannette Chastenier, wife of a merchant-draper on the Pont-au-Change, and another woman, by name Opportune Jadoin, who nursed the sick at the Hôtel-Dieu and was no longer very young. He admitted likewise into his company a gardener of the Ville-l'Evêque, a lad of about sixteen, Robin by name, who bare on his feet and hands the stigmata of the crucifixion, and was shaken by a sore trembling of all his limbs. He often saw the Holy Virgin in corporeal presence, and heard her speech and sa-

voured the divine odours of her glorified body. She had entrusted him with a message for the Regent of England and for the Duke of Burgundy. Meantime the army of Messire Charles of Valois entered the town of Saint-Denis. And no man durst from that day go out of Paris to harvest the fields or gather aught from the market-gardens which covered the plain to the northward of the city. Instantly famine prices ruled, and the inhabitants began to suffer cruelly. And they were further exasperated because they believed themselves betrayed. It was openly said that certain folk, and in especial certain men of Religion, suborned by Messire Charles of Valois, were watching for the best time to stir up trouble and bring in the enemy in an hour of panic and confusion. Haunted by this fear, which was not perhaps altogether baseless, the citizens who kept guard of the ramparts showed scant mercy to any men of evil looks whom they found loitering near the Gates and whom they might suspect, on the most trivial evidence, of making signals to the Armagnacs.

On Thursday, September 8th, the good

people of Paris awoke without any fear of being attacked before the next day. This day, September 8th, was the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin, and it was an established custom with the two factions that tore the Kingdom in twain to keep holy the feast-days of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother.

Yet at this holy season the Parisians, on coming forth from Mass, learnt that, notwithstanding the sacredness of the day, the Armagnacs had appeared before the Porte Saint-Honoré and had set fire to the outwork which defended its approach. It was further reported that Messire Charles of Valois was posted, for the time being, along with Brother Richard and the Maid Jeanne, in the Hog Market without the Walls. The same afternoon, through all the city, on either side the bridges, shouts of fear arose — "Save yourselves! fly, the enemy are come in, all is lost!" The cries were heard even inside the Churches, where pious folks were singing Vespers. These came flying out in terror and ran to their houses to take refuge behind barred doors.

Now the men who went about raising these

cries were emissaries of Messire Charles of Valois. In fact, at that very time, the Company of the Maréchal de Rais was making assault on the Walls near by the Porte Saint-Honoré. The Armagnacs had brought up in carts great bundles of faggots and wattled hurdles to fill up the moats, and above six hundred scaling-ladders for storming the ramparts. The Maid Jeanne, who was nowise as the Burgundians believed, but lived a pious life and guarded her chastity, set foot to ground, and was the first down into a dry moat, which for that cause was easy to cross. But thereupon they found themselves exposed to the arrows and cross-bolts that rained down thick and fast from the Walls. Then they had in front of them a second moat. Wherefore were the Maid and her men-at-arms sore hampered. Jeanne sounded the great moat with her lance and shouted to throw in faggots.

Inside the town could be heard the roar of cannon, and all along the streets the citizens were running, half accoutred, to their posts on the ramparts, knocking over as they went

the brats playing about in the gutters. The chains were drawn across the roadways, and barricades were begun. Tribulation and tumult filled all the place.

But neither the Brother Joconde nor his Penitents saw aught of it, forasmuch as they took heed only of eternal things, and deemed the vain agitation of men to be but a foolish game. They marched through the streets singing the "Veni creator spiritus," and crying out: "Pray, for the times are at hand."

Thus they made their way in good array down the Rue Saint-Antoine, which was densely crowded with men, women, and children. Coming presently to the Place Baudet, Brother Joconde pushed through the throng and mounted a great stone that stood at the door of the Hôtel de la Truie, which Messire Florimont Lecocq, the master of the house, used to help him mount his mule. This Messire Florimont Lecocq was Sergeant at the Châtelet Prison and a partisan of the English.

So, standing on the great stone, Brother Joconde preached to the people. "Sow ye,"

he cried, "sow ye, good folk; sow abundantly of beans, for He which is to come will come quickly."

By the beans they were to sow, the good Brother signified the charitable works it behoved them accomplish before Our Lord should come, in the clouds of heaven, to judge both the quick and the dead. And it was urgent to sow these works without tarrying, for that the harvest would be soon. Guillaumette Dyonis, Simone la Bardine, Jeanne Chastenier, Opportune Jadoin, and Robin the gardener, stood in a ring about the Preacher, and cried "Amen!"

But the citizens, who thronged behind in a great crowd, pricked up their ears and bent their brows, thinking the Monk was foretelling the entry of Charles of Valois into his good town of Paris, over which he was fain — at any rate, so they believed — to drive the ploughshare.

Meanwhile the good Brother went on with his soul-awakening discourse.

"Oh! ye men of Paris, ye are worse than the Pagans of old Rome."

Just then the mangonels firing from the Porte Saint-Denis mingled their thunder with Brother Joconde's voice and shook the bystanders' hearts within them. Some one in the press cried out, "Death! death to traitors!"

All this time Messire Florimont Lecocq was within-doors doing on his armour. He now came forth at the noise, before he had buckled his leg-pieces. Seeing the Monk standing on his mounting-block, he asked:

"What is this good Father saying?"

And a chorus of voices answered:

"Telling us that Messire Charles of Valois is going to enter the city," while others cried:

"He is against the folk of Paris," and others again:

"He would fain cozen and betray us, like the Brother Richard, who at this very time is riding with our enemies."

But Brother Joconde made answer:

"There be neither Armagnacs, nor Burgundians, nor French, nor English, but only the sons of light and the sons of darkness. Ye are lewd fellows and your women wantons."

"Go to, thou apostate! thou sorcerer! thou traitor!" yelled Messire Florimont Lecocq, —and lugging out his sword, he plunged it in the good Brother's bosom.

With pale lips and faltering voice, the man of God still managed to say:

"Pray, fast, do penance, and ye shall be forgiven, my brethren . . ."

Then his voice choked, as the blood poured from his mouth, and he fell on the stones. Two knights, Sir John Stewart and Sir George Morris, threw themselves on the body and pierced it with more than a hundred dagger thrusts, vociferating:

"Long life to King Henry! Long life to my Lord the Duke of Bedford! Down with the Dauphin! Down with the mad Maid of the Armagnacs! Up, up! To the Gates, to the Gates!"

Therewith they ran to the Walls, drawing off with them Messire Florimont and the crowd of citizens.

Meanwhile the holy women and the gardener tarried about the bleeding corse. Simone la Bardine lay prostrate on the ground,

kissing the good Brother's feet and wiping away his blood with her unbound hair.

But Guillaumette Dyonis, standing up with her arms lifted to heaven, cried in a voice as clear as the sound of bells:

"My sisters, Jeanne, Opportune and Simone, and you, my brother, Robin the gardener, let us be going, for the times are at hand. The soul of this good Father holds me by the hand, and it will lead me aright. Wherefore ye must follow along with me. And we will say to those who are making cruel war upon each other: 'Kiss and make peace. And if ye must needs use your arms, take up the cross and go forth all together to fight the Saracens.' Come! my sisters and my brother."

Jeanne Chastenier picked up the shaft of an arrow from the ground, brake it, and made a cross, which she laid on good Brother Joconde's bosom. Then these holy women, and the gardener with them, followed after Guillaumette Dyonis, who led them by the streets and squares and alleys as if her eyes had seen the light of day. They reached the foot of the rampart, and by the stairway of a tower

that was left unguarded, they mounted onto the curtain-wall. There had been no time to furnish it with its hoardings of wood; so they went along in the open. They proceeded toward the Porte Saint-Honoré, by this time enveloped in clouds of dust and smoke. It was there the Maréchal de Rais and his men were making assault. Their bolts flew thick and fast against the ramparts, and they were hurling faggots into the water of the great moat. On the hog's-back parting the great moat from the little, stood the Maid, crying: "Yield, yield you to the King of France." The English had abandoned the top of the wall in terror, leaving their dead and wounded behind them. Guillaumette Dyonis walked first, her head high and her left arm extended before her, while with her right hand she kept signing herself reverently. Simone la Bardine followed close on her heels. Then came Jeanne Chastenier and Opportune Jadoin. Robin the gardener brought up the rear, his body all shaking with his infirmity, and showing the divine stigmata on his hands. They were singing canticles as they walked.

And Guillaumette, turning now toward the city and now toward the open country, cried: "Brethren, embrace ye one another. Live in peace and harmony. Take the iron of your spearheads and forge it into ploughshares!"

Scarce had she spoken ere a shower of arrows, some from the parapet-way where a Company of Citizens was defiling, some from the hog's-back where the Armagnac men-at-arms were massed, flew in her direction, and therewith a storm of insults:

"Wanton! traitress! witch!"

Meanwhile she went on exhorting the two sides to stablish the Kingdom of Jesus Christ upon earth and to live in innocency and brotherly love, till a cross-bow bolt struck her in the throat and she staggered and fell backward.

It was which could laugh the louder at this, Armagnacs or Burgundians. Drawing her gown over her feet, she lay still and made no other stir, but gave up her soul, sighing the name of Jesus. Her eyes, which remained open, glowed like two opals.

Short while after the death of Guillaumette Dyonis the men of Paris returned in great

force to man their Wall, and defended their city right valorously. Jeanne the Maid was wounded by a cross-bow bolt in the leg, and Messire Charles of Valois' men-at-arms fell back upon the Chapelle Saint-Denis. What became of Jeanne Chastenier and Opportune Jadoin no one knows. They were never heard of more. Simone la Bardine and Robin the gardener were taken the same day by the citizens on guard at the Walls and handed over to the Bishop's officer, who duly brought them before the Courts. The Church adjudged Simone heretic, and condemned her for salutary penance to the bread of suffering and the water of affliction. Robin was convicted of sorcery, and, persevering in his error, was burned alive in the Place du Parvis.

FIVE FAIR LADIES

OF PICARDY, OF POITOU, OF TOURAINE, OF LYONS, AND OF PARIS

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NE day the Capuchin, Brother Jean Chavaray, meeting my good master the Abbé Coignard in the cloister of "The Innocents," fell into talk with him of the Brother Olivier Maillard, whose sermons, edifying and macaronic, he had lately been reading.

"There are good bits to be found in these sermons," said the Capuchin, "notably the tale of the five ladies and the go-between . . ." You will readily understand that Brother Olivier, who lived in the reign of Louis XI and whose language smacks of the coarseness of that age, uses a different word. But our century demands a certain politeness and decency in speech; wherefore I employ the term I have, to wit, *go-between.*

"You mean," replied my good master, "to signify by the expression a woman who is so obliging as to play intermediary in matters of love and love-making. The Latin has several names for her, — as *lena*, *conciliatrix*, also *internuntia libidinum*, ambassadress of naughty desires. These prudish dames perform the best of services; but seeing they busy themselves therein for money, we distrust their disinterestedness. Call yours a *procuress*, good Father, and have done with it; 't is a word in common use, and has a not unseemly sound."

"So I will, Monsieur l'Abbé," assented Brother Jean Chavaray. "Only don't say *mine*, I pray, but the Brother Olivier's. A procuress then, who lived on the Pont des Tournelles, was visited one day by a knight, who put a ring into her hands. 'It is of fine gold,' he told her, 'and hath a balass ruby mounted in the bezel. An you know any dames of good estate, go say to the most comely of them that the ring is hers if she is willing to come to see me and do at my pleasure.'

"The procuress knew, by having seen them

at Mass, five ladies of an excellent beauty, — natives the first of Picardy, the second of Poitou, the third of Touraine, another from the good city of Lyons, and the last a Parisian, all dwelling in the Cité or its near neighbourhood.

"She knocked first at the Picard lady's door. A maid opened, but her mistress refused to have one word to say to her visitor. She was an honest woman.

"The procuress went next to see the lady of Poitiers and solicit her favours for the gallant knight. This dame answered her:

"'Prithee, go tell him who sent you that he is come to the wrong house, and that I am not the woman he takes me for.'

"She too is an honest woman; yet less honest than the first, in that she tried to appear more so.

"The procuress then went to see the lady from Tours, made the same offer to her as to the other, and showed her the ring.

"'I' faith,' said the lady, 'but the ring is right lovely.'

"'T is yours, an you will have it.'

"'I will not have it at the price you set on it. My husband might catch me, and I should be doing him a grief he doth not deserve.'

"This lady of Touraine is a harlot, I trow, at bottom of her heart.

"The procuress left her and went straight to the dame of Lyons, who cried:

"'Alack! my good friend, my husband is a jealous wight, and he would cut the nose off my face to hinder me winning any more rings at this pretty tilting.'

"This dame of Lyons, I tell you, is a worthless good-for-naught.

"Last of all the procuress hurried to the Parisian's. She was a hussy, and answered brazenly:

"'My husband goes Wednesday to his vineyards; tell the good sir who sent you I will come that day and see him.'

"Such, according to Brother Olivier, from Picardy to Paris, are the degrees from good to evil amongst women. What think you of the matter, Monsieur Coignard?"

To which my good master made answer:

"'T is a shrewd matter to consider the acts and impulses of these petty creatures in their relations with Eternal Justice. I have no lights thereanent. But methinks the Lyons dame who feared having her nose cut off was a more good-for-nothing baggage than the Parisian who was afraid of nothing."

"I am far, very far, from allowing it," replied Brother Jean Chavaray. "A woman who fears her husband may come to fear hell fire. Her Confessor, it may be, will bring her to do penance and give alms. For, after all, that is the end we must come at. But what can a poor Capuchin hope to get of a woman whom *nothing* terrifies?"

A GOOD LESSON WELL LEARNT

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IN the days of King Louis XI there lived at Paris, in a matted chamber, a citizen dame called Violante, who was comely and well-liking in all her person. She had so bright a face that Master Jacques Tribouillard, doctor in law and a renowned cosmographer, who was often a visitor at her house, was used to tell her:

"Seeing you, madame, I deem credible and even hold it proven, what Cucurbitus Piger lays down in one of his scholia on Strabo, to wit, that the famous city and university of Paris was of old known by the name of Lutetia or Leucecia, or some suchlike word coming from *Leuké*, that is to say, 'the white,' forasmuch as the ladies of the same had bosoms white as snow, — yet not so clear and bright and white as is your own, madame."

To which Violante would say in answer:

"'T is enough for me if my bosom is not fit to fright folks, like some I wot of. And, if I show it, why, 't is to follow the fashion. I have not the hardihood to do otherwise than the rest of the world."

Now Madame Violante had been wedded, in the flower of her youth, to an Advocate of the Parlement, a man of a harsh temper and sorely set on the arraignment and punishing of unfortunate prisoners. For the rest, he was of sickly habit and a weakling, of such a sort he seemed more fit to give pain to folks outside his doors than pleasure to his wife within. The old fellow thought more of his blue bags than of his better half, though these were far otherwise shapen, being bulgy and fat and formless. But the lawyer spent his nights over them.

Madame Violante was too reasonable a woman to love a husband that was so unlovable. Master Jacques Tribouillard upheld she was a good wife, as steadfastly and surely confirmed and stablished in conjugal virtue as Lucretia the Roman. And for proof he alleged that he

had altogether failed to turn her aside from the path of honour. The judicious observed a prudent silence on the point, holding that what is hid will only be made manifest at the last Judgment Day. They noted how the lady was over fond of gewgaws and laces and wore in company and at church gowns of velvet and silk and cloth of gold, purfled with miniver; but they were too fair-minded folk to decide whether, damning as she did Christian men who saw her so comely and so finely dressed to the torments of vain longing, she was not damning her own soul too with one of them. In a word, they were well ready to stake Madame Violante's virtue on the toss of a coin, cross or pile, — which is greatly to the honour of that fair lady.

The truth is her Confessor, Brother Jean Turelure, was for ever upbraiding her.

"Think you, madame," he would ask her, "that the blessed St. Catherine won heaven by leading such a life as yours, baring her bosom and sending to Genoa for lace ruffles?"

But he was a great preacher, very severe on human weaknesses, who could condone naught

and thought he had done everything when he had inspired terror. He threatened her with hell fire for having washed her face with ass's milk.

As a fact, no one could say if she had given her old husband a meet and proper head-dress, and Messire Philippe de Coetquis used to warn the honest dame in a merry vein:

"See to it, I say! He is bald, he will catch his death of cold!"

Messire Philippe de Coetquis was a knight of gallant bearing, as handsome as the knave of hearts in the noble game of cards. He had first encountered Madame Violante one evening at a ball, and after dancing with her far into the night, had carried her home on his crupper, while the Advocate splashed his way through the mud and mire of the kennels by the dancing light of the torches his four tipsy lackeys bore. In the course of these merry doings, a-foot and on horseback, Messire Philippe de Coetquis had formed a shrewd notion that Madame Violante had a limber waist and a full, firm bosom of her own, and there and then had been smit by her charms.

He was a frank and guileless wight and made bold to tell her outright what he would have of her, — to wit, to hold her naked in his two arms.

To which she would make answer:

"Messire Philippe, you know not what you say. I am a virtuous wife," —

Or another time:

"Messire Philippe, come back again to-morrow, —"

And when he came next day she would ask innocently:

"Nay, where is the hurry?"

These never-ending postponements caused the Chevalier no little distress and chagrin. He was ready to believe, with Master Tribouillard, that Madame Violante was indeed a Lucretia, so true is it that all men are alike in fatuous self-conceit! And we are bound to say she had not so much as suffered him to kiss her mouth, — only a pretty diversion after all and a bit of wanton playfulness.

Things were in this case when Brother Jean Turelure was called to Venice by the General of his Order, to preach to sundry Turks lately converted to the true Faith.

Before setting forth, the good Brother went to take leave of his fair Penitent, and upbraided her with more than usual sternness for living a dissolute life. He exhorted her urgently to repent and pressed her to wear a hair-shirt next her skin, — an incomparable remedy against naughty cravings and a sovran medicine for natures over prone to the sins of the flesh.

She besought him: "Good Brother, never ask too much of me."

But he would not hearken, and threatened her with the pains of hell if she did not amend her ways. Then he told her he would gladly execute any commissions she might be pleased to entrust him with. He was in hopes she would beg him to bring her back some consecrated medal, a rosary, or, better still, a little of the soil of the Holy Sepulchre which the Turks carry from Jerusalem together with dried roses, and which the Italian monks sell.

But Madame Violante preferred a quite other request:

"Good Brother, dear Brother, as you are going to Venice, where such cunning work-

men in this sort are to be found, I pray you bring me back a Venetian mirror, the clearest and truest can be gotten."

Brother Jean Turelure promised to content her wish.

While her Confessor was abroad, Madame Violante led the same life as before. And when Messire Philippe pressed her: "Were it not well to take our pleasure together?" she would answer: "Nay! 't is too hot. Look at the weathercock if the wind will not change anon." And the good folk who watched her ways were in despair of her ever giving a proper pair of horns to her crabbed old husband. "'T is a sin and a shame!" they declared.

On his return from Italy Brother Jean Turelure presented himself before Madame Violante and told her he had brought what she desired.

"Look, madame," he said, and drew from under his gown a death's-head.

"Here, madame, is your mirror. This death's-head was given me for that of the prettiest woman in all Venice. She was

what you are, and you will be much like her anon."

Madame Violante, mastering her surprise and horror, answered the good Father in a well-assured voice that she understood the lesson he would teach her and she would not fail to profit thereby.

"I shall aye have present in my mind, good Brother, the mirror you have brought me from Venice, wherein I see my likeness not as I am at present, but as doubtless I soon shall be. I promise you to govern my behaviour by this salutary thought."

Brother Jean Turelure was far from expecting such pious words. He expressed some satisfaction.

"So, madame," he murmured, "you see yourself the need of altering your ways. You promise me henceforth to govern your behaviour by the thought this fleshless skull hath brought home to you. Will you not make the same promise to God as you have to me?"

She asked if indeed she must, and he assured her it behoved her so to do.

"Well, I will give this promise then," she declared.

"Madame, this is very well. There is no going back on your word now."

"I shall not go back on it, never fear."

Having won this binding promise, Brother Jean Turelure left the place, radiant with satisfaction. And as he went from the house, he cried out loud in the street:

"Here is a good work done! By Our Lord God's good help, I have turned and set in the way toward the gate of Paradise a lady, who, albeit not sinning precisely in the way of fornication spoken of by the Prophet, yet was wont to employ for men's temptation the clay whereof the Creator had kneaded her that she might serve and adore him withal. She will forsake these naughty habits to adopt a better life. I have throughly changed her. Praise be to God!"

Hardly had the good Brother gone down the stairs when Messire Philippe de Coetquis ran up them and scratched at Madame Violante's door. She welcomed him with a beaming smile, and led him into a closet, furnished

with carpets and cushions galore, wherein he had never been admitted before. From this he augured well. He offered her sweetmeats he had in a box.

"Here be sugar-plums to suck, madame; they are sweet and sugared, but not so sweet as your lips."

To which the lady retorted he was a vain, silly fop to make boast of a fruit he had never tasted.

He answered her meetly, kissing her forthwith on the mouth.

She manifested scarce any annoyance and said only she was an honest woman and a true wife. He congratulated her and advised her not to lock up this jewel of hers in such close keeping that no man could enjoy it. "For, of a surety," he swore, "you will be robbed of it, and that right soon."

"Try then," said she, cuffing him daintily over the ears with her pretty pink palms.

But he was master by this time to take whatsoever he wished of her. She kept protesting with little cries:

"I won't have it. Fie! fie on you, mes-

sire! You must not do it. Oh! sweetheart . . . oh! my love . . . my life! You are killing me!"

Anon, when she had done sighing and dying, she said sweetly:

"Messire Philippe, never flatter yourself you have mastered me by force or guile. You have had of me what you craved, but 't was of mine own free will, and I only resisted so much as was needful that I might yield me as I liked best. Sweetheart, I am yours. If, for all your handsome face, which I loved from the first, and despite the tenderness of your wooing, I did not before grant you what you have just won with my consent, 't was because I had no true understanding of things. I had no thought of the flight of time and the shortness of life and love; plunged in a soft languor of indolence, I reaped no harvest of my youth and beauty. However, the good Brother Jean Turelure hath given me a profitable lesson. He hath taught me the preciousness of the hours. But now he showed me a death's-head, saying: 'Suchlike you will be soon.' This taught me we must be quick to enjoy the

pleasures of love and make the most of the little space of time reserved to us for that end."

These words and the caresses wherewith Madame Violante seconded them persuaded Messire Philippe to turn the time to good account, to set to work afresh to his own honour and profit and the pleasure and glory of his mistress, and to multiply the sure proofs of prowess which it behoves every good and loyal servant to give on suchlike an occasion.

After which, she was ready to cry quits. Taking him by the hand, she guided him back to the door, kissed him daintily on the eyes, and asked:

"Sweetheart Philippe, is it not well done to follow the precepts of the good Brother Jean Turelure?"

SATAN'S TONGUE-PIE

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ATAN lay in his bed with the flaming curtains. The physicians and apothecaries of Hell, finding their patient had a white tongue, inferred he was suffering from a weakness of the stomach and prescribed a diet at once light and nourishing.

Satan swore he had no appetite for aught but a certain earthly dish, which women excel in making when they meet in company, to wit, tongue-pie.

The doctors agreed there was nothing could better suit His Majesty's stomach.

In an hour's time the dish was set before the King; but he found it insipid and tasteless.

He sent for his Head Cook and asked him where the pie came from.

"From Paris, sire. It is quite fresh; 't was baked this very morning, in the Marais

Quarter, by a dozen gossips gathered round the bed at a woman's lying-in."

"Ah! now I know the reason it is so flavourless," returned the Prince of Darkness. "You have not been to the best cooks for dishes of the sort. Citizens' wives, they do their best; but they lack delicacy, they lack the fine touch of genius. Women of the people are clumsier still. For a real good tongue-pie a Nunnery is the place to go to. There's nobody to match these old maids of Religion for a pretty skill in compounding all the needful ingredients,—fine spices of rancour, thyme of backbiting, fennel of insinuation, bay-leaf of calumny."

This parable is taken from a sermon of the good Father Gillotin Landoulle, a poor, unworthy Capuchin.

CONCERNING AN

HORRIBLE PICTURE

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THE WHICH WAS SHOWED IN A TEMPLE AND OF SUNDRY LIMNINGS OF A RIGHT PACIFIC AND AMOROUS SORT THE WHICH THE SAGE PHILEMON HAD HANGED IN HIS LIBRARIE AND OF A NOBLE PORTRAITURE OF THE POET HOMER THE WHICH THE AFORESAID PHILEMON DID PRIZE ABOVE ALL OTHER LIMNINGS

HILEMON was used to confess how, in the fire of his callow youth and fine flower of his lustie springal days, he had been stung with murderous frenzie at view of a certaine picture of Apelles, the which in those times was showed in a temple. And the said picture did present Alexander the Great laying on right shrewdly at Darius, king of the Indians, whiles round about these twain, soldiers and captains were a-slaying one another with a savage furie and in divers strange fashions. And the said work was right cun-

ningly wrought and in very close mimicrie of nature. And none, an they were in the hot and lustie season of their life, could cast a look thereon without being stirred incontinent to be striking and killing poor harmlesse folk for the sole sake of donning so rich an harnesse and bestriding such high-stepping chargers as did these good codpieces in their battle, — for that young blood doth aye take pleasure in horse-flesh and the practise of arms. This had the aforesaid Philemon proven in his day. And he was used to say how ever after 't was his wont to turn aside his eyen of set purpose from suchlike pictures of wars and bloodshed, and that he did so heartily loathe these cruelties as that he could not abear to behold them even set forth in counterfeit presentment.

And he was used to say that any honest and prudent wight must needs be sore offended and scandalized by all this appalling array of armour and bucklers and the horde of warriors Homer calls *Corythaioloi* (glancing-helmed) by reason of the terrifying hideousness of their head-gear, and that the portrayal of these same fighting fellows was in very truth unseemly, as

contrarie to good and peaceable manners, immodest, no thing in the world being more shameful then homicide, and eke lascivious, as alluring folk to cruelty, the which is the worst of all allurements. For to entice to pleasant dalliaunce is a far lesse heinous fault.

And the aforesaid Philemon was used to say that it was honest, decent, of good ensample and entirely modest to show by painting, chiselling, or any other fine artifice the scenes of the Golden Age, to wit maidens and young men interlacing limbs in accord with the craving of kindly Nature, or other the like delectable fancy, as of a Nymph lying laughing in the grass. And on her ripe smiling mouth a Faun is crushing a purple grape.

And he was used to say that belike the Golden Age had never flourished save only in the fond imagining of the poets, and that our first forebears of human kind, being yet barbarous and silly folk, had known naught at all thereof; but that, an the said age could not credibly be deemed to have been at the beginning of the world, we might well wish it should be at the end, and that meanwhiles it

was a gracious boon to offer us a likeness of the same in pictured image.

And like as it is (so he would say) obscene, — 't is the word Virgil writes of dogs wallowing in the mud and mire, — to depict murderers, whoreson men-at arms, fighting-men, conquering heroes and plundering thieves, wreaking their foul and wicked will, yea! and poor devils licking the dust and swallowing the same in great mouthfuls, and one unhappie wretch that hath been felled to the earth and is striving to get to his feet againe, but is pinned down by an horse's hoof pressing on his chops, and another that looketh piteously about him for that his pennon hath been shorn from him and his hand with it, — so is it of right subtile and so to say heavenly art to exhibit prettie blandishments, caresses, frolickings, beauties and delights, and the loves of the Nymphs and Fauns in the woods. And he would have it there was none offence in these naked bodies, clothed upon enow with their owne grace and comeliness.

And he had in his closet, this same Philemon aforesaid, a very marvellous painting, wherein was limned a young Faun in act to filch away

with a craftie hand a light cloth did cover the belly of a sleeping Nymph. 'T was plain to see he was full fain of his freak and seemed to be saying: The body of this young goddess is so sweet and refreshing as that the fountaine springing in the shade of the woods is not more delightsome. How I do love to look upon you, soft sweet lap, and prettie white thighs, and shady cavern at once terrifying and entrancing! And over the heads of the twain did hover winged Cupids and watched them laughingly, whiles fair dames and their gallants, their brows wreathen with flowers, footed it on the lush grass.

And he had, the aforesaid Philemon, yet other limnings of cunning craftsmanship in his closet. And he did prize very high the portraiture of a good doctor a-sitting in his cabinet writing at a table by candle-light. The said cabinet was fully furnished with globes, gnomons, and astrolabes, proper for meting the movements of the orbs of heaven, the which is a right praiseworthy task and one that doth lift the spirit to sublime thoughts and the exceeding pure love of Venus Urania.

And there was hanging from the joists of the said cabinet a great serpent and crocodile, forasmuch as they be rarities and very needful for the due understanding of anatomy. And he had likewise, the said doctor, amid his belongings, the books of the most excellent philosophers of Antiquity and eke the treatises of Hippocrates. And he was an ensample to young men which should be fain, by hard swinking, to stuff their pates with as much high learning and occult lore as he had under his own bonnet.

And he had, the aforesaid Philemon, painted on a panel that shined like a polished mirror a portraiture of Homer in the guise of an old blind man, his beard white as the flowers of the hawthorn and his temples bound about with the fillets sacred to the god Apollo, which had loved him above all other men. And, to look at that good old man, you deemed verily his lips were presently to ope and break into words of melodie.

MADEMOISELLE DE DOUCINE'S NEW YEAR'S PRESENT

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ON January 1st, in the forenoon, the good M. Chanterelle sallied out on foot from his hôtel in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel. He felt the cold and was a poor walker; so it was a real penance to him to face the chilly air and the bleak streets which were full of half-melted snow. He had refused to take his coach by way of mortifying the flesh, having grown very solicitous since his illness about the salvation of his soul. He lived in retirement, aloof from all society and company, and paid no visits save to his niece, Mademoiselle de Doucine, a little girl of seven.

Leaning on his walking-cane, he made his way painfully to the Rue Saint-Honoré and entered the shop of Madame Pinson at the sign of the *Panier Fleuri*. Here was dis-

played an abundant stock of children's toys to tempt customers seeking presents for this New Year's Day of 1696. You could scarce move for the host of mechanical figures of dancers and tipplers, birds in the bush that clapped their wings and sang, cabinets full of wax puppets, soldiers in white and blue ranged in battle array, and dolls dressed some as fine ladies, others as servant wenches, for the inequality of stations, established by God himself among mankind, appeared even in these innocent mannikins.

M. Chanterelle chose a doll. The one he selected was dressed like the Princess of Savoy on her arrival in France, on November 4th. The head was a mass of bows and ribbons; she wore a very stiff corsage, covered with gold filigrees, and a brocade petticoat with an overskirt caught up by pearl clasps.

M. Chanterelle smiled to think of the delight such a lovely doll would give Mademoiselle de Doucine, and when Madame Pinson handed him the Princess of Savoy wrapped up in silk paper, a gleam of sensuous satisfaction flitted over his kind face, pinched as it was with

illness, pale with fasting and haggard with the fear of hell.

He thanked Madame Pinson courteously, clapped the Princess under his arm and walked away, dragging his leg painfully, towards the house where he knew Mademoiselle de Doucine was waiting for him to attend her morning levée.

At the corner of the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec, he met M. Spon, whose great nose dived almost into his lace cravat.

"Good morning, Monsieur Spon," he greeted him. "I wish you a happy New Year, and I pray God everything may turn out according to your wishes."

"Oh! my good sir, don't say that," cried M. Spon. "'T is often for our chastisement that God grants our wishes. *Et tribuit eis petitionem eorum.*"

"'T is very true," returned M. Chanterelle, "we do not know our own best interests. I am an example myself, as I stand before you. I thought at first that the complaint I have suffered from for the last two years was a curse; but I see now it is a blessing, since

it has removed me from the abominable life I was leading at the play-houses and in society. This complaint, which tortures my limbs and is like to turn my brain, is a signal token of God's goodness toward me. But, sir, will you not do me the favour to accompany me as far as the Rue du Roule, whither I am bound, to carry a New Year's gift to my niece Mademoiselle de Doucine?"

At the words M. Spon threw up his arms and gave a great cry of horror.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Can it be M. Chanterelle I hear say such things,— and not some profligate libertine? Is it possible, sir, that living as you do a religious and retired life, I see you all in a moment plunge into the vices of the day?"

"Alack! I did not think I was plunging into vice," faltered M. Chanterelle, trembling all over. "But I sorely lack a lamp of guidance. Is it so great a sin then to offer a doll to Mademoiselle de Doucine?"

"Yes, a great and terrible sin," replied M. Spon. "And what you are offering this innocent child to-day is meeter to be called an

idol, a devilish simulacrum, than a doll. Are you not aware, sir, that the custom of New Year's gifts is a foul superstition and a hideous survival of Paganism?"

"No, I did not know that," said M. Chanterelle.

"Let me tell you, then," resumed M. Spon, "that this custom descends from the Romans, who seeing something divine in all beginnings, held the beginning of the year holy also. Hence, to act as they did is to do idolatry. You make New Year's offerings, sir, in imitation of the worshippers of the God Janus. Be consistent, and like them consecrate to Juno the first day of every month."

M. Chanterelle, hardly able to keep his feet, begged M. Spon to give him his arm, and while they moved on, M. Spon proceeded in the same vein:

"Is it because the Astrologers have fixed on the first of January for the beginning of the year that you deem yourself obliged to make presents on that day? Pray, what call have you to revive at that precise date the affection of your friends. Was their love dying then

with the dying year? And will it be so much worth the having when you have reanimated it by dint of cajolements and baneful gifts?"

"Sir," returned the good M. Chanterelle, leaning on M. Spon's arm and trying hard to make his tottering steps keep pace with his impetuous companion's, "sir, before my sickness, I was only a miserable sinner, taking no heed but to treat my friends with civility and govern my behaviour by the principles of honesty and honour. Providence hath deigned to rescue me from this abyss, and I direct my conduct since my conversion by the admonitions the Director of my conscience gives me. But I have been so light-minded and thoughtless as not to seek his advice on this question of New Year's gifts. What you tell me of them, sir, with the authority of a man alike admirable for sober living and sound doctrine, amazes and confounds me."

"Nay! that is indeed what I mean to do," resumed M. Spon,—"to confound you, and to illumine you, not indeed by my own lights, which burn feebly, but by those of a great Doctor. Sit you down on that wayside post."

And pushing M. Chanterelle into the archway of a carriage gate, where he made himself as easy as circumstances allowed, M. Spon drew from his pocket a little parchment-bound book, which he opened, and after hunting through the pages, lighted on a passage which he proceeded to read out loud amid a gaping circle of chimney-sweeps, chamber-maids, and scullions who had collected at the resounding tones of his voice:

"'We who hold in abhorrence the festivals of the Jews, and who would deem strange and outlandish their Sabbaths and New Moons and other Holy Days erst loved of the Almighty, we deal familiarly with the Saturnalia and the Calends of January, with the Matronalia and the Feast of the Winter Solstice; New Year's gifts and foolish presents fill all our thoughts; merrymakings and junketings are in every house. The Heathens guard their religion better; they are heedful to observe none of our Feasts, for fear of being taken for Christians, while we never hesitate to make ourselves look like Heathens by celebrating their Ceremonial Days.'

"You hear what I say," went on M. Spon. "'T is Tertullian speaks in this wise and from the depths of Africa displays before your eyes, sir, the odiousness of your behaviour. He it is upbraids you, declaring how 'New Year's gifts and foolish presents fill all your thoughts. You keep holy the feasts of the Heathen.' I have not the honour to know your Confessor. But I shudder, sir, to think of the way he neglects his duty toward you. Tell me this, can you rest assured that at the day of your death, when you come to stand before God, he will be at your side, to take upon him the sins he hath suffered you to fall into?"

After haranguing in this sort, he put back his book in his pocket and marched off with angry strides, followed at a distance by the astonished chimney-sweeps and scullions.

The good M. Chanterelle was left sitting alone on his post with the Princess of Savoy, and thinking how he was risking the eternal pains of hell fire for giving a doll to Mademoiselle de Doucine, his niece, he fell to pondering the unfathomable mysteries of Religion.

His legs, which had been tottery for several

months, refused to carry him, and he felt as unhappy as ever a well-meaning man possibly can in this world.

He had been sitting stranded in this distressful mood on his post for some minutes when a Capuchin friar stepped up and addressed him:

"Sir, will you not give New Year's presents to the Little Brethren who are poor, for the love of God?"

"Why! what! good Father," M. Chanterelle burst out, "you are a man of religion, and you ask me for New Year's gifts?"

"Sir," replied the Capuchin, "the good St. Francis bade his sons make merry with all simplicity. Give the Capuchins wherewith to make a good meal this day, that they may endure with cheerfulness the abstinence and fasting they must observe all the rest of the year, — barring, of course, Sundays and Feast Days."

M. Chanterelle gazed at the holy man with wonder:

"Are you not afraid, Father, that this custom of New Year's gifts is baneful to the soul?"

"No, I am not afraid."

"The custom comes to us from the Pagans."

"The Pagans sometimes followed good customs. God was pleased to suffer some faint rays of his light to pierce the darkness of the Gentiles. Sir, if you refuse to give *us* presents, never refuse a boon to our poor little ones. We have a home for foundlings. With this poor crown I shall buy each child a little paper windmill and a cake. They will owe you the only pleasure perhaps of all their life; for they are not fated to have much joy in the world. Their laughter will go up to heaven; when children laugh, they praise the Lord."

M. Chanterelle laid his well-filled purse in the poor friar's palm and got him down from his post, saying over softly to himself the word he had just heard:

"When children laugh, they praise the Lord."

Then his soul was comforted and he marched off with a firmer step to carry the Princess of Savoy to Mademoiselle de Doucine, his niece.

MADEMOISELLE ROXANE

MADEMOISELLE ROXANE

MY good master, M. l'Abbé Coignard, had taken me with him to sup with one of his old fellow-students, who lodged in a garret in the Rue Gît-le-Cœur. Our host, a Premonstratensian Father of much learning and a fine Theologian, had fallen out with the Prior of his House for having writ a little book relating the calamities of Mam'zelle Fanchon. The end of it was he turned tavern-keeper at The Hague. He was now returned to France and living precariously by the sermons he composed, which were full of high argument and eloquence. After supper he had read us these same calamities of Mam'zelle Fanchon, source of his own, and the reading had kept us there till a late hour. At last I found myself without-doors with my good master, under a wondrous fine

summer's night, which made me straightway comprehend the verity of the ancient fables regarding the loves of Diana and feel how natural it is to employ in soft dalliance the silent, silvery hours of night. I said as much to M. l'Abbé Coignard, who retorted that love is to blame for many and great ills.

"Tournebroche, my son," he asked me, "have you not just heard from the mouth of yonder good Monk how, for having loved a recruiting sergeant, a clerk of M. Gaulot's mercer at the sign of the Truie-qui-file, and the younger son of M. le Lieutenant-Criminel Leblanc, Mam'zelle Fanchon was clapped in hospital? Would you wish to be any of these, — sergeant or clerk or limb of the law?"

I answered I would indeed. My good master thanked me for my candid avowal, and quoted some verses of Lucretius to persuade me that love is contrary to the tranquillity of a truly philosophical soul.

Thus discoursing, we were come to the round-point of the Pont-Neuf. Leaning our elbows on the parapet, we looked over at the

great tower of the Châtelet, which stood out black in the moonlight.

"There might be much to say," sighed my good master, "on this justice of the civilized nations, the punishments whereof in retaliation are often more cruel than the crime itself. I cannot believe that these tortures and penalties that men inflict on their fellows are necessary for the safeguarding of States, seeing how from time to time one and another legal cruelty is done away with without hurt to the commonweal. And I hold it likely that the severities they still maintain are no whit more useful than those they have abolished. But men are cruel. Come away, Tournebroche, my dear lad; it grieves me to think how unhappy prisoners are even now lying awake behind those walls in anguish and despair. I know they have done faultily, but this doth not hinder me from pitying them. Which of us is without offence?"

We went on our way. The bridge was deserted save for a beggarman and woman, who met on the causeway. The pair drew stealthily into one of the recesses over the

piers, where they lurked together on the door-step of a huckster's booth. They seemed well enough content, both of them, to mingle their joint wretchedness, and when we went by were thinking of quite other things than craving our charity. Nevertheless my good master, who was the most compassionate of men, threw them a half farthing, the last piece of money left in his breeches pocket.

"They will pick up our obol," he said, "when they have come back to the consciousness of their misery. I pray they may not quarrel then over fiercely for possession of the coin."

We passed on without further rencounter till on the Quai des Oiseleurs we espied a young damsel striding along with a notable air of resolution. Hastening our pace to get a nearer view, we saw she had a slim waist and fair hair in which the moonbeams played prettily. She was dressed like a citizen's wife or daughter.

"There goes a pretty girl," said the Abbé; "how comes it she is out of doors alone at this hour of night?"

"Truly," I agreed, "'t is not the sort one generally encounters on the bridges after curfew."

Our surprise was changed to alarm when we saw her go down to the river bank by a little stairway the sailors use. We ran towards her; but she did not seem to hear us. She halted at the edge; the stream was running high, and the dull roar of the swollen waters could be heard some way off. She stood a moment motionless, her head thrown back and arms hanging, in an attitude of despair. Then, bending her graceful neck, she put her two hands over her face and kept it hid behind her fingers for some seconds. Next moment she suddenly grasped her skirts and dragged them forward with the gesture a woman always uses when she is going to jump. My good master and I came up with her just as she was taking the fatal leap, and we hauled her forcibly backward. She struggled to get free of our arms; and as the bank was all slimy and slippery with ooze deposited by the receding waters (for the river was already beginning to fall), M.

l'Abbé Coignard came very near being dragged in too. I was losing my foothold myself. But as luck would have it, my feet lighted on a root which held me up as I crouched there with my arms round the best of masters and this despairing young thing. Presently, coming to the end of her strength and courage, she fell back on M. l'Abbé Coignard's breast, and we managed all three to scramble to the top of the bank again. He helped her up daintily, with a certain easy grace that was always his. Then he led the way to a great beech-tree at the foot of which was a wooden bench, on which he seated her.

Taking his place beside her:

"Mademoiselle," he said gently, "you need have no fear. Say nothing just yet, but be assured it is a friend sits by you."

Next, turning to me, my master went on:

"Tournebroche, my son, we may congratulate ourselves on having brought this strange adventure to a good end. But I have left my hat down yonder on the river bank; albeit it has lost pretty near all its lace and is thread-

bare with long service, it was still good to guard my old head, sorely tried by years and labours, against sun and rain. Go see, my son, if it may still be found where I dropped it. And if you discover it, bring it me, I beg,—likewise one of my shoe buckles, which I see I have lost. For my part I will stay by this damsel we have rescued and watch over her slumber."

I ran back to the spot we had just quitted and was lucky enough to find my good master's hat. The buckle I could not espy anywhere. True, I did not take any very excessive pains to hunt for it, having never all my life seen my good master with more than one shoe buckle. When I returned to the tree, I found the damsel still in the same state, sitting quite motionless with her head leant against the trunk of the beech. I noticed now that she was of a very perfect beauty. She wore a silk mantle trimmed with lace, very neat and proper, and on her feet light shoes, the buckles of which caught the moonbeams.

I could not have enough of examining her. Suddenly she opened her drooping lids, and

casting a look that was still misty at M. Coignard and me, she began in a feeble voice, but with the tone and accent, I thought, of a person of gentility:

"I am not ungrateful, sirs, for the service you have done me from feelings of humanity; but I cannot truthfully tell you I am glad, for the life to which you have restored me is a curse, a hateful, cruel torment."

At these sad words my good master, whose face wore a look of compassion, smiled softly, for he could not really think life was to be for ever hateful to so young and pretty a creature.

"My child," he told her, "things strike us in a totally different light according as they are near at hand or far off. It is no time for you to despair. Such as I am, and brought to this sorry plight by the buffets of time and fortune, I yet make shift to endure a life wherein my pleasures are to translate Greek and dine sometimes with sundry very worthy friends. Look at me, mademoiselle, and say, — would you consent to live in the same conditions as I?"

She looked him over; her eyes almost

laughed, and she shook her head. Then, resuming her melancholy and mournfulness, she faltered:

"There is not in all the world so unhappy a being as I am."

"Mademoiselle," returned my good master, "I am discreet both by calling and temperament; I will not seek to force your confidence. But your looks betray you; any one can see you are sick of disappointed love. Well, 't is not an incurable complaint. I have had it myself, and I have lived many a long year since then."

He took her hand, gave her a thousand tokens of his sympathy, and went on in these terms:

"There is only one thing I regret for the moment, — that I cannot offer you a refuge for the night, or what is left of it. My present lodging is in an old château a long way from here, where I am busy translating a Greek book along with young Master Tournebroche whom you see here."

My master spoke the truth. We were living at the time with M. d'Astarac, at the

Château des Sablons, in the village of Neuilly, and were in the pay of a great alchemist, who died later under tragic circumstances.

"At the same time, mademoiselle," my master added, "if you should know of any place where you think you could go, I shall be happy to escort you thither."

To which the girl answered she appreciated all his kindness, that she lived with a kinswoman, to whose house she could count on being admitted at any hour; but that she had rather not return before daylight. She was fain, she said, not to disturb quiet folks' sleep, and dreaded moreover to have her grief too painfully renewed by the sight of her old, familiar surroundings.

As she spoke thus, the tears rained down from her eyes. My good master bade her:

"Mademoiselle, give me your handkerchief, if you please, and I will wipe your eyes. Then I will take you to wait for daybreak under the archways of the Halles, where we can sit in comfort under shelter from the night dews."

The girl smiled through her tears.

"I do not like," she said, "to give you so much trouble. Go your way, sir, and rest assured you take my best thanks with you."

For all that she laid her hand on the arm my good master offered her, and we set out, all the three of us, for the Halles. The night had turned much cooler. In the sky, which was beginning to assume a milky hue, the stars were growing paler and fainter. We could hear the first of the market-gardeners' carts rumbling along to the Halles, drawn by a slow-stepping horse, half asleep in the shafts. Arrived at the archways, we chose a place in the recess of a porch distinguished by an image of St. Nicholas, and established ourselves all three on a stone step, on which M. l'Abbé Coignard took the precaution of spreading his cloak before he let his young charge sit down.

Thereupon my good master fell to discoursing on divers subjects, choosing merry and enlivening themes of set purpose to drive away the gloomy thoughts that might assail our companion's mind. He told her he accounted this rencounter the most fortunate he had ever chanced on all his life, and that he should ever

cherish a fond recollection of one who had so deeply touched him, — all this, however, without ever asking to know her name and story.

My good master thought no doubt that the unknown would presently tell him what he refrained from asking. She broke into a fresh flood of weeping, heaved a deep sigh and said:

"I should be churlish, sir, to reward your kindness with silence. I am not afraid to trust myself in your hands. My name is Sophie T——. You have guessed the truth; 't is the betrayal of a lover I was too fondly attached to has brought me to despair. If you deem my grief excessive, that is because you do not know how great was my assurance, how blind my infatuation, and you cannot realize how enchanting was the paradise I have lost."

Then, raising her lovely eyes to our faces, she went on:

"Sirs, I am not such a woman as your meeting me thus at night time might lead you to suppose. My father was a merchant. He went, in the way of trade, to America, and was lost on his way home in a shipwreck, he

and his merchandise with him. My mother was so overwhelmed by these calamities that she fell into a decline and died, leaving me, while still a child, to the charge of an aunt, who brought me up. I was a good girl till the hour I met the man whose love was to afford me indescribable delights, ending in the despair wherein you now see me plunged."

So saying, Sophie hid her face in her handkerchief. Presently she resumed with a sigh:

"His worldly rank was so far above my own I could never expect to be his except in secret. I flattered myself he would be faithful to me. He swore he loved me, and easily overcame my scruples. My aunt was aware of our feelings for one another, and raised no obstacles, for two reasons, — because her affection for me made her indulgent, and because my dear lover's high position impressed her imagination. I lived a year of perfect happiness only equalled by the wretchedness I now endure. This morning he came to see me at my aunt's, with whom I live. I was haunted by dark forebodings. As I dressed my hair but an hour or so before, I had broken a mirror he

had given me. The sight of him only increased my misgivings, for I noticed instantly that his face wore an unaccustomed look of constraint . . . Oh! sir, was ever woman so unhappy as I? . . ."

Her eyes filled again with tears; but she kept them back under her lids, and was able to finish her tale, which my good master deemed as touching, but by no means so unique, as she did herself.

"He informed me coldly, though not without signs of embarrassment, that his father having bought him a Company, he was leaving to join the colours. First, however, he said, his family required him to plight his troth to the daughter of an Intendant of Finances; the connection was advantageous to his fortune and would bring him means adequate to support his rank and make a figure in the world. And the traitor, never deigning to notice my pale looks, added in his soft, caressing voice which had made me so many vows of affection, that his new obligations would prevent his seeing me again, at least for some while. He assured me further that he

was still my friend and begged me to accept a sum of money in memory of the days we had passed together.

"And with the words he held out a purse to me.

"I am telling you the truth, sirs, when I assure you I had always refused to listen to the offers he repeated again and again, to give me fine clothes, furniture, plate, an establishment, and to take me away from my aunt's, where I lived in very narrow circumstances, and settle me in a most elegant little mansion he had in the Rue du Roule. My wish was that we should be united only by the ties of affection, and I was proud to have of his gift nothing but a few jewels whose sole value came from the fact of his being the donor. My gorge rose at the sight of the purse he offered me, and the insult gave me strength to banish from my presence the impostor whom in one moment I had learnt to know and to despise. He faced my angry looks unabashed, and assured me with the utmost unconcern that I could know nothing of the paramount obligations that fill the existence of a man of quality,

adding that he hoped eventually, when I looked at things quietly, I should come to see his behaviour in a better light. Then, returning the purse to his pocket, he declared he would readily find a way of putting the contents at my disposal in such a manner as to make it impossible for me to refuse his liberality. Thus leaving me with the odious, the intolerable implication that he was going to make full amends by these sordid means, he made for the door to which I pointed without a word. When he was gone, I felt a calmness of mind that surprised myself. It arose from the resolution I had formed to die. I dressed with some care, wrote a letter to my aunt asking her forgiveness for the pain I was about to cause her by my death, and went out into the streets. There I roamed about all the afternoon and evening and a part of the night, moving from busy thoroughfare to deserted lane without a trace of fatigue, postponing the execution of my purpose to make it more sure and certain under the favouring conditions of darkness and solitude. Possibly too I found a certain

weak pleasure in dallying with the thought of dying and tasting the mournful satisfaction of my coming release from my troubles. At two o'clock in the morning, I went down to the river's brink. Sirs, you know the rest, — you snatched me from a watery grave. I thank you for your goodness, — though I am sorry you saved my life. The world is full of forsaken women. I did not wish to add another to the number."

Sophie then fell silent and began weeping afresh. My good master took her hand with the greatest delicacy.

"My child," he said, "I have listened with a tender interest to the story of your life, and I own 't is a sad tale. But I am happy to discern that your case is curable. Not only was your lover unworthy of the favours you showed him and has proved himself on trial a selfish, cruel-hearted libertine, but I see plainly your love for him was only an impulse of the senses and the effect of your own sensibility, the particular object of which mattered far less than you imagine. What there was rare and excellent in the liaison came from you. Well then,

nothing is lost, since the source still remains. Your eyes, which have thrown a glamour of the fairest hues over, I doubt not, a very ordinary individual, will not cease to go on shedding abroad elsewhere the same bright rays of charming self-delusion."

My good master said more in the same strain, dropping from his lips the finest words ever heard anent the tribulations of the senses and the errors lovers are prone to. But, as he talked on, Sophie, who for some while had let her pretty head droop on the shoulder of this best of men, fell softly asleep. When M. l'Abbé Coignard saw his young friend was wrapped in a sound slumber, he congratulated himself on having discoursed in a vein so meet to afford repose and peace to a suffering soul.

"It must be allowed," he chuckled, "my sermons have a beneficent effect."

Not to disturb Mademoiselle's slumbers, he took a thousand pretty precautions, amongst others constraining himself to talk on uninterruptedly, not unreasonably apprehensive that a sudden silence might awake her.

"Tournebroche, my son," he said, turning

to me, "look, all her sorrows are vanished away with the consciousness she had of them. You must see they were all of the imagination and resided in her own thought. You must understand likewise they sprang from a certain pride and overweening conceit that goes along with love and makes it very exacting. For, in truth, if only we loved in humbleness of spirit and forgetfulness of self, or merely with a simple heart, we should be content with what is vouchsafed us and should not straightway cry treason when some slight is put on us. And if some power of loving were left us still, after our lover had deserted us, we should await the issue in calmness of mind to make what use of it God should please to grant."

But the day was just breaking by this time, and the song of the birds grew so loud it drowned my good master's voice. He made no complaint on this score.

"Hearken," he said, "to the sparrows. They make love more wisely than men do."

Sophie awoke in the white light of dawn, and I admired her lovely eyes, which fatigue and grief had ringed with a delicate pearly

grey. She seemed somewhat reconciled to life, and did not refuse a cup of chocolate which my good master made her drink at Mathurine's door, the pretty chocolate-seller of the Halles.

But as the poor child came into more complete possession of her wits, she began to trouble about sundry practical difficulties she had not thought of till then.

"What will my aunt say? And whatever can I tell her?" she asked distractedly.

The aunt lived just opposite Saint-Eustache, less than a hundred yards from Mathurine's archway. Thither we escorted her niece; and M. l'Abbé Coignard, who had quite a venerable look, though one shoe *was* unbuckled, accompanied the fair Sophie to the door of her aunt's lodging and pitched that lady a fine tale:

"I had the happy fortune," he informed her, "to encounter your good niece at the very moment when she was assailed by four footpads armed with pistols, and I shouted for the watch so lustily that the thieves took to their heels in a panic. But they were not

quick enough to escape the sergeants who, by the rarest chance, ran up in answer to my outcries. They arrested the villains after a desperate tussle. I took my share of the rough and tumble, and I thought at first I had lost my hat in the fray. When all was over, we were all taken, your niece, the four footpads and myself, before his Honour the Lieutenant-Criminel, who treated us with much consideration and detained us till daylight in his cabinet, taking down our evidence."

The aunt answered drily:

"I thank you, sir, for having saved my niece from a peril which, to say the truth, is not the risk a girl of her age need fear the most, when she is out alone at night in the streets of Paris."

My good master made no answer to this; but Mademoiselle Sophie spoke up and said in a voice of deep feeling:

"I do assure you, Aunt, Monsieur l'Abbé saved my life."

. . . . . .

Some years after this singular adventure, my master made the fatal journey to Lyons

from which he never returned. He was foully murdered, and I had the ineffable grief of seeing him expire in my arms. The incidents of his death have no connexion with the matter I speak of here. I have taken pains to record them elsewhere; they are indeed memorable, and will never, I think, be forgotten. I may add that this journey was in all ways unfortunate, for after losing the best of masters on the road, I was likewise forsaken by a mistress who loved me, but did not love me alone, and whose loss nearly broke my heart, coming after that of my good master. It is a mistake to suppose that a man who has received one cruel blow grows callous to succeeding strokes of calamity. Far otherwise; he suffers agonies from the smallest contrarieties. I returned to Paris in a state of dejection almost beyond belief.

Well, one evening, by way of enlivening my spirits, I went to the Comédie, where they were playing *Bajazet*, one of Racine's excellent pieces. I was particularly struck by the charm and beauty, no less than the originality and talent, of the actress who took the part

of Roxane. She expressed with a delightful naturalness the passion animating that character, and I shuddered as I heard her declaim in accents that were harmonious and yet terrible the line:

*Écoutez, Bajazet, je sens que je vous aime.**

I never wearied of gazing at her all the time she occupied the stage, and admiring the beauty of her eyes that gleamed below a brow as pure as marble and crowned by powdered locks all spangled with pearls. Her slender waist too, which her hoop showed off to perfection, did not fail to make a vivid impression on my heart. I had the better leisure to scrutinize these adorable charms as she happened to face in my direction to deliver several important portions of her rôle. And the more I looked, the more I felt convinced I had seen her before, though I found it impossible to recall anything connected with our previous meeting. My neighbour in the theatre, who was a constant frequenter of the Comédie, told me the beautiful actress was

* "Hearken, Bajazet, I feel I love you."

Mademoiselle B——, the idol of the pit. He added that she was as great a favourite in society as on the boards, that M. le Duc de La —— had made her the fashion and that she was on the highroad to eclipse Mademoiselle Lecouvreur.

I was just leaving my seat after the performance when a "femme de chambre" handed me a note in which I found written in pencil the words:

"*Mademoiselle Roxane is waiting for you in her coach at the theatre door.*"

I could not believe the missive was intended for me; and I asked the abigail who had delivered it if she was not mistaken in the recipient.

"If I *am* mistaken," she replied confidently, "then you cannot be Monsieur de Tournebroche, that is all."

I ran to the coach which stood waiting in front of the House, and inside I recognized Mademoiselle B——, her head muffled in a black satin hood.

She beckoned to me to get in, and when I was seated beside her:

"Do you not," she asked me, "recognize Sophie, whom you rescued from drowning on the banks of the Seine?"

"What! you! Sophie — Roxane — Mademoiselle B——, is it possible?—"

My confusion was extreme, but she appeared to view it without annoyance.

"I saw you," she went on, "in one corner of the pit. I knew you instantly and played for you. Say, did I play well? I am so glad to see you again!—"

She asked me news of M. l'Abbé Coignard, and when I told her my good master had just perished miserably, she burst into tears.

She was good enough to inform me of the chief events of her life:

"My aunt," she said, "used to mend her laces for Madame de Saint-Remi, who, as you must know, is an admirable actress. A short while after the night when you did me such yeoman service, I went to her house to take home some pieces of lace. The lady told me I had a face that interested her. She then asked me to read some verses, and concluded I was not without wits. She had me trained.

I made my first appearance at the Comédie last year. I interpret passions I have felt myself, and the public credits me with some talent. M. le Duc de La —— exhibits a very dear friendship for me, and I think he will never cause me pain and disappointment, because I have learnt to ask of men only what they can give. At this moment he is expecting me at supper. I must not break my word."

But, reading my vexation in my eyes, she added:

"However, I have told my people to go the longest way round and to drive slowly."

CHILD LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

FANCHON

I

ANCHON went early one morning, like Little Red Riding-Hood, to see her grandmother, who lives right at the other end of the village. But Fanchon did not stop like little Red Riding-Hood, to gather nuts in the wood. She went straight on her way and she did not meet the wolf.

From a long way off she saw her grandmother sitting on the stone step at her cottage door, a smile on her toothless mouth and her arms, as dry and knotty as an old vine-stock, open to welcome her little granddaughter. It rejoices Fanchon's heart to spend a whole day with her grandmother; and her grandmother, whose trials and troubles are all over and who lives as happy as a cricket in the warm chimney-corner, is rejoiced too to see

her son's little girl, the picture of her own childhood.

They have many things to tell each other, for one of them is coming back from the journey of life which the other is setting out on.

"You grow a bigger girl every day," says the old grandmother to Fanchon, "and every day I get smaller; I scarcely need now to stoop at all to touch your forehead. What matters my great age when I can see the roses of my girlhood blooming again in your cheeks, my pretty Fanchon?"

But Fanchon asked to be told again — for the hundredth time — all about the glittering paper flowers under the glass shade, the coloured pictures where our Generals in brilliant uniforms are overthrowing their enemies, the gilt cups, some of which have lost their handles, while others have kept theirs, and grandfather's gun that hangs above the chimney-piece from the nail where he put it up himself for the last time, thirty years ago.

But time flies, and the hour is come to get ready the midday dinner. Fanchon's grandmother stirs up the drowsy fire; then

she breaks the eggs on the black earthenware platter. Fanchon is deeply interested in the bacon omelette as she watches it browning and sputtering over the fire. There is no one in the world like her grandmother for making omelettes and telling pretty stories. Fanchon sits on the settle, her chin on a level with the table, to eat the steaming omelette and drink the sparkling cider. But her grandmother eats her dinner, from force of habit, standing at the fireside. She holds her knife in her right hand, and in the other a crust of bread with her toothsome morsel on it. When both have done eating:

"Grandmother," says Fanchon, "tell me the 'Blue Bird.'"

And her grandmother tells Fanchon how, by the spite of a bad fairy, a beautiful Prince was changed into a sky-blue bird, and of the grief the Princess felt when she heard of the transformation and saw her love fly all bleeding to the window of the Tower where she was shut up.

Fanchon thinks and thinks.

"Grandmother," she says at last, "is it a

great while ago the Blue Bird flew to the Tower where the Princess was shut up?"

Her grandmother tells her it was many a long day since, in the times when the animals used to talk.

"You were young then?" asks Fanchon.

"I was not yet born," the old woman tells her.

And Fanchon says:

"So, grandmother, there were things in the world even before you were born?"

And when their talk is done, her grandmother gives Fanchon an apple with a hunch of bread and bids her:

"Run away, little one; go and play and eat your apple in the garden."

And Fanchon goes into the garden, where there are trees and grass and flowers and birds.

II

HER grandmother's garden was full of grass and flowers and trees, and Fanchon thought it was the prettiest garden in all the world. By this time she had pulled out her pocket-knife to cut her bread with, as they do in the village. First she munched her apple, then she began upon her bread. Presently a little bird came fluttering past her. Then a second came, and a third. Soon ten, twenty, thirty were crowding round Fanchon. There were grey birds, and red, there were yellow birds, and green, and blue. And all were pretty and they all sang. At first Fanchon could not think what they wanted. But she soon saw they were asking for bread and that they were little beggars. Yes, they were beggars, but they were singers as well. Fanchon was too kind-hearted to refuse bread to any one who paid for it with songs.

She was a little country girl, and she did not know that once long ago, in a country where white cliffs of marble are washed by the blue sea, a blind old man earned his daily bread by singing the shepherds' songs which the learned still admire to-day. But her heart laughed to hear the little birds, and she tossed them crumbs that never reached the ground, for the birds always caught them in the air.

Fanchon saw that the birds were not all the same in character. Some would stand in a ring round her feet waiting for the crumbs to fall into their beaks. These were philosophers. Others again she could see circling nimbly on the wing all about her. She even noticed one little thief that darted in and pecked shamelessly at her own slice.

She broke the bread and threw crumbs to them all; but all could not get some to eat. Fanchon found that the boldest and cleverest left nothing for the others.

"That is not fair," she told them; "each of you ought to take his proper turn."

But they never heeded; nobody ever does, when you talk of fairness and justice. She

tried every way to favour the weak and hearten the timid; but she could make nothing of it, and do what she would, she fed the big fat birds at the expense of the thin ones. This made her sorry; she was such a simple child she did not know it is the way of the world.

Crumb by crumb, the bread all went down the little singers' throats. And Fanchon went back very happy to her grandmother's house.

III

HEN night fell, her grandmother took the basket in which Fanchon had brought her a cake, filled it with apples and grapes, hung it on the child's arm, and said:

"Now, Fanchon, go straight back home, without stopping to play with the village ragamuffins. Be a good girl always. Good-bye."

Then she kissed her. But Fanchon stood thinking at the door.

"Grandmother?" she said.

"What is it, little Fanchon?"

"I should like to know," said Fanchon, "if there are any beautiful Princes among the birds that ate up my bread."

"Now that there are no more fairies," her grandmother told her, "the birds are all birds and nothing else."

"Good-bye, grandmother."

"Good-bye, Fanchon."

And Fanchon set off across the meadows for her home, the chimneys of which she could see smoking a long way off against the red sky of sunset.

On the road she met Antoine, the gardener's little boy. He asked her:

"Will you come and play with me, Fanchon?"

But she answered:

"I won't stop to play with you, because my grandmother told me not to. But I will give you an apple, because I love you very much."

Antoine took the apple and kissed the little girl.

They loved each other fondly.

He called her his little wife, and she called him her little husband.

As she went on her way, stepping soberly along like a staid, grown-up person, she heard behind her a merry twittering of birds, and turning round to look, she saw they were the same little pensioners she had fed when

they were hungry. They came flying after her.

"Good night, little friends," she called to them, "good night! It's bedtime now, so good night!"

And the winged songsters answered her with little cries that mean "God keep you!" in bird language.

So Fanchon came back to her mother's to the sound of sweet music in the air.

IV

ANCHON lay down in the dark in her little bed, which a carpenter in the village had made long ago of walnut-wood and carved a light railing alongside. The good old man had been resting years and years now under the shadow of the church, in a grass-grown bed; for Fanchon's cot had been her grandfather's when he was a little lad, and he had slept where she sleeps now. A curtain of pink-sprigged cotton protects her slumbers; she sleeps, and in her dreams she sees the Blue Bird flying to his sweetheart's Castle. She thinks he is as beautiful as a star, but she never expects him to come and light on her shoulder. She knows *she* is not a Princess, and no Prince changed into a blue bird will come to visit her. She tells herself that all birds are not Princes; that the birds

of her village are villagers, and that there might be one perhaps found amongst them, a little country lad changed into a sparrow by a bad fairy and wearing in his heart under his brown feathers the love of little Fanchon. Yes, if *he* came and she knew him, she would give him not bread crumbs only, but cake and kisses. She would so like to see him, and lo! she sees him; he comes and perches on her shoulder. He is a jack-sparrow, only a common sparrow. He has nothing rich or rare about him, but he looks alert and lively. To tell the truth, he is a little torn and tattered; he lacks a feather in his tail; he has lost it in battle — unless it was through some bad fairy of the village. Fanchon has her suspicions he is a naughty bird. But she is a girl, and she does not mind her jack-sparrow being a trifle headstrong, if only he has a kind heart. She pets him and calls him pretty names. Suddenly he begins to grow bigger; his body gets longer; his wings turn into two arms; he is a boy, and Fanchon knows who he is — Antoine, the gardener's little lad, who asks her:

"Shall we go and play together, shall we, Fanchon?"

She claps her hands for joy, and away she goes. . . . But suddenly she wakes and rubs her eyes. Her sparrow is gone, and so is Antoine! She is all alone in her little room. The dawn, peeping in between the flowered curtains, throws a white, innocent light over her cot. She can hear the birds singing in the garden. She jumps out of bed in her little nightgown and opens the window; she looks out into the garden, which is gay with flowers — roses, geraniums, and convolvulus — and spies her little pensioners, her little musicians, of yesterday. There they all sit in a row on the garden-fence, singing her a morning hymn to pay her for their crumbs of bread.

THE FANCY-DRESS BALL

ERE we have little boys who are conquering heroes and little girls who are heroines. Here we have shepherdesses in hoops and wreaths of roses and shepherds in satin coats, who carry crooks tied with knots of riband. Oh! what white, pretty sheep they must be these shepherds tend! Here are Alexander the Great and Zaïre, and Pyrrhus and Merope, Mahomet, Harlequin, Pierrot, Scapin, Blaise and Babette. They have come from all parts, from Greece and Rome and the lands of Faëry, to dance together. What a fine thing a fancy ball is, and how delicious to be a great King for an hour or a famous Princess! There is nothing to spoil the pleasure. No need to act up to your costume, nor even to talk in character.

It would be poor fun, mind you, to wear heroes' clothes if you had to have a hero's heart as well. Heroes' hearts are torn with all sorts of sorrows. They are most of them famous for their calamities. If they had lived happy, we should never have heard of them. Merope had no wish to dance. Pyrrhus was cruelly slain by Orestes just when he was going to wed, and the innocent Zaïre perished by the hand of her lover the Turk, philosophical Turk though he was. As for Blaise and Babette, the song says they suffer fond regrets that go on forever.

Why speak of Pierrot and Scapin? You know as well as I do they were scamps, and got their ears pulled more than once. No! glory costs too dear, even Harlequin's. On the contrary, it is very agreeable to be little boys and girls, and have the look of being great personages. That is why there is no pleasure to compare with a fancy ball, when the dresses are splendid enough. Only to wear them makes you feel brave. Then think how proud and pretty all your little friends are with their feathers and mantles;

how gallant and gay and noble they look, and how like the fine folks of olden times.

In the gallery, where you cannot see them, the musicians, with sad, gentle faces, are tuning up their fiddles. A stately quadrille lies open on their stands. They are going to attack the old-fashioned piece. At the first notes our heroes and masks will lead off the dance.

THE SCHOOL

I PROCLAIM Mademoiselle Genseigne's school the best girls' school in the world. I declare miscreants and slanderers any who shall think or say the contrary. Mademoiselle Genseigne's pupils are all well-behaved and industrious, and there is no pleasanter sight to see than all their small figures sitting so still, and all the heads in a straight row. They look like so many little bottles into which Mademoiselle Genseigne is busy pouring useful knowledge.

Mademoiselle Genseigne sits very upright at her high desk. She has a gentle, serious face; her neatly braided hair and her black tippet inspire respect and sympathy.

Mademoiselle Genseigne, who is very clever, is teaching her little pupils cyphering. She says to Rose Benoît:

"Rose Benoît, if I take four from twelve, what have I left?"

"Four?" answers Rose Benoît.

Mademoiselle Genseigne is not satisfied with the answer.

"And you, Emmeline Capel, if I take four from twelve, how much have I left?"

"Eight," Emmeline Capel answers.

"You hear, Rose Benoît, I have eight left," insists Mademoiselle Genseigne.

Rose Benoît falls into a brown study. Mademoiselle Genseigne has eight left, she is told, but she has no notion if it is eight hats or eight handkerchiefs, or possibly eight apples or eight feathers. The doubt has long tormented her. She can make nothing of arithmetic.

On the other hand, she is very wise in Scripture History. Mademoiselle Genseigne has not another pupil who can describe the Garden of Eden or Noah's Ark as Rose Benoît can. Rose Benoît knows every flower in the Garden and all the animals in the Ark. She knows as many fairy tales as Mademoiselle Genseigne herself. She knows

all the fables of the Fox and the Crow, the Donkey and the Little Dog, the Cock and the Hen, and what they said to each other. She is not at all surprised to hear that the animals used once to talk. The wonder would be if some one told her they don't talk now. She is quite sure she understands what her big dog Tom says and her little canary Chirp. She is quite right; animals have always talked, and they talk still; but they only talk to their friends. Rose Benoît loves them and they love her, and that is why she understands what they say. To understand each other there is nothing like loving one another.

To-day Rose Benoît has said her lessons without a mistake. She has won a good mark. Emmeline Capel has a good mark, too, for knowing her arithmetic lesson so well.

On coming out of school, she told her mother she had a good mark. Then she asked her:

"A good mark, mother, what's the use of it?"

"A good mark is of no use," Emmeline's mother answered; "that is the very reason why we should be proud to get one. You will find out one day, my child, that the rewards most highly esteemed are just those that bring honour without profit."

MARIE

ITTLE girls long to pluck flowers and stars — it is their nature to. But stars will not be plucked, and the lesson they teach little girls is, that in this world there are longings that are never satisfied. Mademoiselle Marie has gone into the park, where she came upon a bed of hydrangeas; she saw how pretty the flowers were and that made her gather one. It was very difficult; she dragged with both hands, and very nearly tumbled over backwards when the stalk broke. She is pleased and proud at what she has done. But nurse has seen her. She runs up, snatches at Mademoiselle Marie's arm, scolds her, and sets her to stand and repent, not in the black closet, but at the foot of a great chestnut, under the shade of a huge Japanese umbrella.

There Mademoiselle Marie sits and thinks, in great surprise and perplexity. Her flower in one hand and the umbrella making a bright halo round her, she looks like a little idol from overseas.

Nurse has told her: "Marie, you must not put that flower in your mouth. If you do it when I tell you not, your little dog Toto will come and eat up your ears." And with these terrible words she walks away.

The young culprit, sitting quite still under her brilliant canopy, looks about her and gazes at earth and sky. It is a big world she sees, big enough and beautiful enough to amuse a little girl for some while. But her hydrangea blossom is more interesting than all the rest put together. She thinks to herself: "It is a flower; it must smell good?" And she puts her nose to the pretty pink and blue ball; she sniffs, but she cannot smell anything. She is not very good at scenting perfume; it is only a short while since she always used to blow at a rose instead of inhaling its odour. You must not laugh at her for that; one cannot learn everything at once.

Besides, if she had as keen a sense of smell as her mother, she would be no better off in this case. A hydrangea *has* no scent; that is why we get tired of it, for all its loveliness. But now Mademoiselle Marie begins to think: "Perhaps it's made of sugar, this flower." Then she opens her mouth very wide and is just going to lift the flower to her lips.

But suddenly, *yap!* goes her little dog. It is Toto, who comes bounding over a geranium bed and comes to a stand right in front of Mademoiselle Marie, with his ears cocked straight up, and stares hard at her out of his sharp little round eyes.

THE PANDEAN PIPES

HREE children of the same village, Pierre, Jacques, and Jean, stand staring, side by side in a row, where they look for all the world like a mouth-organ or Pandean Pipes, only with three pipes instead of seven. Pierre, to the left, is a tall lad; Jean, to the right, is a short child; Jacques, who is betwixt the two, may call himself tall *or* short, according as he looks at his left-hand or his right-hand neighbour. It is a situation I would beg you to ponder, for it is your own, and mine, and everybody else's. Each one of us is just like Jacques, and deems himself great or small according as his neighbours' inches are many or few.

That is the reason why it is true to say that Jacques is neither tall nor short, and why it is also true to say he is tall *and* he is short. He

is what God chooses him to be. For us, he is the middle reed of our living Pandean Pipes.

But what is he doing, and what are his two comrades doing? They are staring, staring hard, all three. What at? At something that has disappeared in the distance, something that has vanished out of sight; yet they can see it still, and their eyes are dazzled with its splendours. It makes little Jean clean forget his eel-skin whiplash and the peg-top he has always been so fond of keeping for ever spinning with it in the dusty roads. Pierre and Jacques stand stolidly, their hands behind their backs.

What is the wonderful sight that has bewildered all three? A pedlar's cart, a hand-cart; they had seen it stop in the village street.

Then the pedlar drew back his oil-cloth covering, and all, men, women, and children, feasted their eyes on knives, scissors, popguns, jumping Jacks, wooden soldiers and lead soldiers, bottles of scent, cakes of soap, coloured pictures, and a thousand other splen-

did objects. The servant-wenches from the farm and the mill turned pale with longing; Pierre and Jacques flushed red with delight. Little Jean put out his tongue at it all. Everything the barrow held seemed to them rich and rare. But what they coveted most of all were those myterious articles whose meaning and use they could make nothing of. For instance, there were polished globes like mirrors that reflected their faces with the features ludicrously distorted. There were Epinal wares with figures in impossibly vivid colours; there were little cases and boxes with nobody knows what inside.

The women made purchases of muslins and laces by the yard, and the pedlar rolled the black oil-cloth cover back again over the treasures of his barrow. Then, pulling at the collar, he hauled off his load after him along the highroad. And now barrow and barrow-man have disappeared below the horizon.

ROGER'S STUD

IT is a great anxiety keeping a stud. The horse is a delicate animal and needs a lot of looking after. Just ask Roger if it does n't!

He is busy now grooming his noble chestnut, which would be the pearl of wooden horses, the flower of the Black Forest stud-farms, if only he had not lost half his tail in battle. Roger would so like to know whether wooden horses' tails grow again.

After rubbing them down in fancy, Roger gives his horses an imaginary feed of oats. That is the proper way to feed these elfin creatures of wood on whose backs little boys gallop through the land of dreams.

Now Roger is off for his ride, mounted on his mettled charger. The poor beast has no ears left and his mane is all notched like an

old broken comb; but Roger loves him. Why it would be hard to say! This bay was the gift of a poor man; and the presents of the poor are somehow sweeter perhaps than any others.

Roger is off. He has ridden far. The flowers of the carpet are the blossoms of the tropical forest. Good luck to you, little Roger! May your hobby-horse carry you happily through the world! May you never have a more dangerous mount! Small and great, we all ride ours! Which of us has not his hobby?

Men's hobbies gallop like mad things along the roads of life; one is chasing glory, another pleasure; many leap over precipices and break their rider's neck. I wish you luck, little Roger, and I hope, when you are a man, you will bestride two hobbies that will always carry you along the right road; one is spirited, the other gentle-tempered; they are both noble steeds; one is called Courage and the other Kindness.

COURAGE

OUISON and Frédéric are off to school along the village street. The sun shines gaily and the two children are singing. They sing like the nightingale, because their hearts are light like his. They sing an old song their grandmothers sang when they were little girls, a song their children's children will sing one day; for songs are tender flowers that never die, they fly from lip to lip down the ages. The lips fade and fall silent one after the other, but the song lives on for ever. There are songs come down to us from the days when the men were shepherds and all the women shepherdesses. That is the reason why they speak of nothing but sheep and wolves.

Louison and Frédéric sing; their mouths are as round as a flower and the song rises shrill and thin and clear in the morning air.

But listen! suddenly the notes stick in Frédéric's throat.

What unseen power is it has strangled the music on the boy's lips? It is fear. Every day, as sure as fate, he comes upon the butcher's dog at the end of the village street, and every day his heart seems to stop and his legs begin to shake at the sight. Yet the butcher's dog does not fly at him, or even threaten to. He sits peaceably at his master's shop-door. But he is black, and he has a staring bloodshot eye and shows a row of sharp white teeth. He looks frightful. And then he squats there in the middle of bits of meat and offal and all sorts of horrors — which makes him more terrifying still. Of course it is n't his fault, but he is the presiding genius. Yes, a savage brute, the butcher's dog! So, the instant Frédéric catches sight of the beast before the shop, he picks up a big stone, as he sees grown-up men do to keep off bad-tempered curs, and he slinks past close, close under the opposite wall.

That is how he behaved this time; and Louison laughed at him.

She did not make any of those daredevil speeches one generally caps with others more reckless still. No, she never said a word; she never stopped singing. But she altered her voice and began singing on such a mocking note that Frédéric reddened to his very ears. Then his little head began to buzz with many thoughts. He learned that we must dread shame even more than danger. And he was afraid of being afraid.

So, when school was over and he saw the butcher's dog, he marched undauntedly past the astonished animal.

History adds that he kept a corner of his eye on Louison to see if she was looking. It is a true saying that, if there were no dames nor damsels in the world, men would be less courageous.

CATHERINE'S "AT HOME"

IT is five o'clock. Mademoiselle Catherine is "at home" to her dolls. It is her "day." The dolls do not talk; the little Genie that gave them their smile did not vouchsafe the gift of speech. He refused it for the general good; if dolls could talk, we should hear nobody but them. Still there is no lack of conversation. Mademoiselle Catherine talks for her guests as well as for herself; she asks questions and gives the answers.

"How do you do? — Very well, thank you. I broke my arm yesterday morning going to buy cakes. But it's quite well now. — Ah! so much the better. — And how is your little girl? — She has the whooping-cough. — Ah! what a pity! Does she cough much? — Oh! no, it's a whoop-

ing-cough where there's no cough. You know I had two more children last week. — Really? that makes four does n't it? — Four or five, I've forgotten which. When you have so many, you get confused. — What a pretty frock you have. — Oh! I've got far prettier ones still at home. — Do you go to the theatre? — Yes, every evening. I was at the Opera yesterday; but Polichinelle was n't playing, because the wolf had eaten him. — I go to dances every day, my dear. — It is so amusing. — Yes, I wear a blue gown and dance with the young men, Generals, Princes, Confectioners, all the most distinguished people. — You look as pretty as an angel to-day, my dear. — Oh! it's the spring. — Yes, but what a pity it's snowing. — *I* love the snow, because it's white. — Oh! there's black snow, you know. — Yes, but that's the bad snow."

There's fine conversation for you; Mademoiselle Catherine's tongue goes nineteen to the dozen. Still I have one fault to find with her; she talks all the time to the same visitor, who is pretty and wears a fine frock.

There she is wrong. A good hostess is equally gracious to all her guests. She treats them all with affability, and if she shows any particular preference, it is to the more retiring and the less prosperous. We should flatter the unhappy; it is the only flattery allowable. But Catherine has discovered this for herself. She has guessed the secret of true politeness: a kind heart is everything. She pours out tea for the company, and forgets nobody. On the contrary, she presses the dolls that are poor and unhappy and shy to help themselves to invisible cakes and sandwiches made of dominoes.

Some day Catherine will hold a salon where the old French courtesy will live again.

LITTLE SEA-DOGS

THEY are sailor boys, regular little sea-dogs. Look at them; they have their caps pulled down over their ears so that the gale blowing in from the sea and bringing the spindrift with it may not deafen them with its dreadful howling. They wear heavy woollen clothes to keep out the cold and wet. Their patched pea-jacket and breeches have been their elders' before them. Most of their garments have been contrived out of old things of their father's. Their soul is likewise of the same stuff as their father's; it is simple, brave, and long-suffering. At birth they inherited a single-hearted, noble temper. Who and what gave it them? After God and their parents, the Sea. The Sea teaches sailors courage by teaching them to face danger. It is a rough but kindly instructor.

That is why our little sailor-boys, though their hearts are childlike still, have the spirit of gallant veterans. Elbows on the parapet of the sea-wall, they gaze out into the offing. It is more than the blue line marking the faint division between sea and sky that they see. Their eyes care little for the soft, changing colours of the ocean or the vast, contorted masses of the clouds. What they see, as they look seawards, is something more moving than the hue of the waves or the shape of the clouds; it is a suggestion of human love. They are spying for the boats that sailed away for the fishing; presently they will loom again on the horizon, laden with shrimp to the gunwales, and bringing home uncles and big brothers and fathers. The little fleet will soon appear yonder betwixt the ocean and God's sky with its white or brown sails. To-day the sky is unclouded, the sea calm; the flood tide floats the fishers gently to the shore. But the Ocean is a capricious old fellow, who takes all shapes and sings in many voices. To-day he laughs; to-morrow he will be growling in the night under his

beard of foam. He shipwrecks the most handy boats, though they have been blessed by the Priest to the chanting of the *Te Deum;* he drowns the most skilful master mariners, and it is all his fault you see in the village, before the cottage doors where the nets hang to dry beside the fish-creels, so many women wearing black widow's weeds.

GETTING WELL

ERMAINE is ill. Nobody knows how it began. The arm which sows fever is invisible like the dustman's hand, the old fellow who comes every night and makes the little ones so sleepy. But Germaine was not ill very long and she was not very bad, and now she is getting well again. This getting well is even pleasanter than being quite well, which comes next. In the same way hoping and wishing are better, very often, than anything we wish for or hope for. Germaine lies in bed in her pretty, bright room, and her dreams are as bright-coloured as her room.

She looks, a little languidly still, at her doll, which sleeps beside her own bed. There are sympathies that go deep between little girls and their dolls. Germaine's doll

fell ill at the same time as her little mamma, and now she is getting well with her. She will take her first carriage outing sitting by Germaine's side.

She has seen the doctor too. Alfred came to feel the doll's pulse. He is Doctor "As-bad-as-can-be." He talks of nothing but cutting off arms and legs. But Germaine asked him so earnestly that he agreed to cure her dolly without slashing it to pieces. But he prescribed the nastiest medicines.

Illness has one advantage at any rate; it makes us know our friends. Germaine is sure now she can count on Alfred's goodness; she is certain Lucie is the best of sisters. All the nine days her illness lasted, Lucie came to learn her lessons and do her sewing in the sick room. She insists on bringing the little patient her herb-tea herself. And it is not a bitter potion, such as Alfred ordered; no, it is balmy with the scent of wild flowers.

When she smells its perfume, Germaine's thoughts fly to the flowery mountain paths, the haunt of children and bees, where she

played so often last year. Alfred too remembers the beautiful ways, and the woods, and the springs, and the mules that climbed up and up on the brink of precipices with a sound of tinkling bells.

ACROSS THE MEADOWS

FTER breakfast Catherine started off to the meadows with her little brother Jean. When they set out, the day seemed as young and fresh as they were. The sky was not altogether blue; it was grey rather, but of a tenderer grey than any blue. Catherine's eyes are just the same grey, as if made out of a bit of morning sky.

Catherine and Jean wander all by themselves through the fields. Their mother is a farmer's wife and is at work at home. They have no nurse-maid to take them, and they don't need one. They know their way, and all the woods and fields and hills. Catherine can tell the time by looking at the sun, and she has guessed all sorts of pretty secrets of Nature that town-bred children have no suspicion of. Little Jean himself understands

a great many things about the woods, the pools, and the mountains, for his little soul is a country soul.

Catherine and Jean go roaming through the flowery meadows. As they go, Catherine gathers a nosegay. She picks blue centauries, scarlet poppies, cuckoo-flowers, and buttercups, which she also knows as *little chicks*. She picks those pretty purple blossoms that grow in hedgerows and are called Venus' looking-glasses. She picks the dark ears of the milkwort, and crane's-bill and lily of the valley, whose tiny white bells shed a delicious perfume at the least puff of wind. Catherine loves flowers because they are beautiful; and she loves them too because they make such pretty ornaments. She is very simply dressed, and her pretty hair is hid under a brown linen cap. She wears a cotton check pinafore over her plain frock, and goes in wooden shoes. She has never seen rich dresses except on the Virgin Mary and the St. Catherine in the parish church. But there are some things little girls know directly they are born. Catherine knows

that flowers are becoming to wear, and that pretty ladies who pin nosegays in their bosoms look lovelier than ever. So she has a notion she must be very fine indeed now, carrying a nosegay bigger than her own head. Her thoughts are as bright and fragrant as her flowers. They are thoughts that cannot be put into words; there are no words pretty enough. It wants song tunes for that, the liveliest and softest airs, the sweetest songs. So Catherine sings, as she gathers her nosegay: "Away to the woods alone" and "My heart is for him, my heart is for him."

Little Jean is of another temper. He follows another line of ideas. He is a broth of a boy, he is; Jean is not breeched yet, but his spirit is beyond his years and there's no more rollicking blade than he. While he grips his sister's pinafore with one hand, for fear of tumbling, he shakes his whip in the other like a sturdy lad. His father's head stableman can hardly crack his any better when he meets his sweetheart, bringing home the horses from watering at the river. Little Jean is lulled by no soft reveries. He never

heeds the field flowers. The games he dreams of are stiff jobs of work. His thoughts dwell on wagons stogged in the mire and big cart-horses hauling at the collar at his voice and under his lash.

Catherine and Jean have climbed above the meadows, up the hill, to a high ground from which you can make out all the chimneys of the village dotted among the trees and in the far distance the steeples of six parishes. Then you see what a big place the world is. Then Catherine can better understand the stories she has been taught, — the dove from the Ark, the Israelites in the Promised Land, and Jesus going from city to city.

"Let 's sit down there," she says.

Down she sits, and, opening her hands, she sheds her flowery harvest all over her. She is all fragrant with blossoms, and in a moment the butterflies come fluttering round her. She picks and chooses and matches her flowers; she weaves them into garlands and wreaths, and hangs flower-bells in her ears; she is decked out now like the rustic image

of a Holy Virgin the shepherds venerate. Her little brother Jean, who has been busy all this while driving a team of imaginary horses, sees her in all this bravery. Instantly he is filled with admiration. A religious awe penetrates all his childish soul. He stops, and the whip falls from his fingers. He feels that she is beautiful and all smothered in lovely flowers. He tries in vain to say all this in his soft, indistinct speech. But she has guessed. Little Catherine is his big sister, and a big sister is a little mother; she foresees, she guesses; she has the sacred instinct.

"Yes, darling," cries Catherine, "I am going to make you a beautiful wreath, and you will look like a little king."

And so she twines together the white flowers, the yellow flowers, and the red flowers, into a chaplet. She puts it on little Jean's head, and he flushes with pride and pleasure. She kisses her little brother, lifts him in her arms and plants him, all garlanded with blossoms, on a big stone. Then she looks at him admiringly, because he is beautiful and *she* has made him so.

And standing there on his rustic pedestal, little Jean knows he is beautiful, and the thought fills him with a deep respect for himself. He feels he is something holy. Very upright and still, with round eyes and tight-drawn lips, arms by his side with the palms open and the fingers parted like the spokes of a wheel, he tastes a pious joy to be an idol — he is sure he is an idol now. The sky is overhead, the woods and fields lie at his feet. He is the hub of the universe. He alone is great, he alone is beautiful.

But suddenly Catherine breaks into a laugh. She shouts:

"Oh! how funny you look, little Jean! how funny you do look!"

She runs up and throws her arms round him, she kisses him and shakes him; the heavy wreath of flowers slips down over his nose. And she laughs again:

"Oh! how funny he looks! how very funny!"

But it is no laughing matter for little Jean. He is sad and sorry, wondering why it is all over and he has left off being beautiful. It hurts to come down to earth again!

Now the wreath is unwound and tossed on the grass, and little Jean is like anybody else once more. Yes, he has left off being beautiful. But he is still a sturdy young scamp. He soon has his whip in hand again and now he is hauling his team of six, the six big cart-horses of his dreams, out of that rut. Catherine is still playing with her flowers. But some of them are dying. Others are closing in sleep. For the flowers go to sleep like the animals, and look! the campanulas, plucked a few hours ago, are shutting their purple bells and sinking asleep in the little hands that have parted them from life.

A light breeze blows by, and Catherine shivers. It is night coming.

"I am hungry," says little Jean.

But Catherine has not a bit of bread to give her little brother. She says:

"Little brother, let's go back to the house."

And they both think of the cabbage soup steaming in the pot that hangs from the hook right under the great chimney. Catherine gathers her flowers in her arm and taking her

little brother by the hand, she leads him homewards.

The sun sank slowly down to the ruddy West. The swallows swooped past the two children, almost touching them with their wings, that hardly seemed to move. It was getting dark. Catherine and Jean pressed closer together.

Catherine dropped her flowers one after the other by the way. They could hear, in the wide silence, the untiring chirp-chirp of the crickets. They were afraid, both of them, and they were sad; the melancholy of nightfall had entered into their little hearts. All round them was familiar ground, but the things they knew the best looked strange and uncanny. The earth seemed suddenly to have grown too big and too old for them. They were tired, and they began to think they would never reach the house, where mother was making the soup for all the family. Jean's whip hung limp and still, and Catherine let the last of her flowers slip from her tired fingers. She was dragging Jean along by the arm, and neither said a word.

At last they saw a long way off the roof of their house and smoke rising in the darkening sky. Then they stopped running, and clapping their hands together, shouted for joy. Catherine kissed her little brother; then they set off running again as fast as ever their weary legs would carry them. When they reached the village, there were women coming back from the fields who gave them good evening. They breathed again. Their mother was on the door-step, in a white cap, soup-ladle in hand.

"Come along, little ones, come along!" she called to them. And they threw themselves into her arms. When she reached the parlour where the cabbage soup was smoking on the table, Catherine shivered again. She had seen night come down over the earth. Jean, seated on the settle, his chin on a level with the table, was already eating his soup.

THE MARCH PAST

ENÉ, Bernard, Roger, Jacques, and Étienne feel sure there is nothing finer in the world than to be a soldier. Francine agrees with them and she would love to be a boy to join the army. They think so because soldiers wear fine uniforms, epaulettes and gold lace, and glittering swords. There is yet another reason for putting the soldier in the front rank of citizens — because he gives his life for his Country. There is no true greatness in this world but that of sacrifice, and to offer one's life is the greatest of all sacrifices, because it includes all others. That is why the hearts of the crowd beat high when a regiment goes by.

René is the General. He wears a cocked hat and rides a war-horse. The hat is made of paper and the horse is a chair. His army

consists of a drummer and four men — of whom one is a girl! "Shoulder arms! Forward, march!" and the march past begins. Francine and Roger look quite imposing under arms. True, Jacques does not hold his gun very valiantly. He is a melancholy lad. But we must not blame him for that; dreamers can be just as brave as those who never dream at all. His little brother Étienne, the tiniest mite in the regiment, looks pensive. He is ambitious; he would like to be a general officer right away, and that makes him sad.

"Forward! forward!" René shouts the order. "We are to fall on the Chinese, who are in the dining-room." The Chinese are chairs. When you play at fighting, chairs make first-rate Chinese. They fall — and what better can the Chinese do? When all the chairs are feet in air, René announces: "Soldiers, now we have beaten the Chinese, we will have our rations." The idea is well received on all hands. Yes, soldiers must eat. This time the Commissariat has furnished the best of victuals — buns, maids of honour,

coffee cakes and chocolate cakes, red-currant syrup. The army falls to with a will. Only Étienne will eat nothing. He frowns and looks enviously at the sword and cocked hat which the General has left on a chair. He creeps up, snatches them, and slips into the next room. There he stands alone before the glass; he puts on the cocked hat and waves the sword; he is a general, a general without an army, a general all to himself. He tastes the pleasures of ambition — pleasures full of vague forecastings and long, long hopes.

DEAD LEAVES

UTUMN is here. The wind blowing through the woods whirls about the dead leaves. The chestnuts are stripped bare already and lift their black skeleton arms in the air. And now the beeches and hornbeams are shedding *their* leaves. The birches and aspens are turned to trees of gold, and only the great oak keeps his coronal of green.

The morning is fresh; a keen wind is chasing the clouds across a grey sky and reddening the youngsters' fingers. Pierre, Babet, and Jeannot are off to collect the dead leaves, the leaves that once, when they were still alive, were full of dew and songs of birds, and which now strew the ground in thousands and thousands with their little shrivelled corpses. They are dead, but they smell good. They

will make a fine litter for Riquette, the goat and Roussette, the cow. Pierre has taken his big basket; he is quite a little man. Babet has her sack; she is quite a little woman. Jeannot comes last trundling the wheelbarrow.

Down the hill they go at a run. At the edge of the wood they find the other village children, who are come too to lay in a store of dead leaves for the winter. It is not play, this; it is work.

But never think the children are sad, because they are at work. Work is serious, yes; it is not sad. Very often the little ones mimic it in fun, and children's games, most times, are copies of their elders' workaday doings.

Now they are hard at it. The boys do their part in silence. They are peasant lads, and will soon be men, and peasants do not talk much. But it is different with the little peasant girls; *their* tongues go at a fine pace, as they fill the baskets and bags.

But now the sun is climbing higher and warming the country pleasantly. From the cottage roofs rise light puffs of smoke. The

children know what that means. The smoke tells them the pease-soup is cooking in the pot. One more armful of dead leaves, and the little workers will take the road home. It is a stiff climb. Bending under sacks or toiling behind barrows, they soon get hot, and the sweat comes out in beads. Pierre, Babet and Jeannot stop to take breath.

But the thought of the pease-soup keeps up their courage. Puffing and blowing, they reach home at last. Their mother is waiting for them on the door-step and calls out: "Come along, children, the soup is ready."

Our little friends find this capital. There's no soup so good as what you have worked for.

SUZANNE

THE Louvre, as you know, is a museum where beautiful things and ancient things are kept safe — and this is wisely done, for old age and beauty are both alike venerable. Among the most touching of the antiquities treasured in the Louvre Museum is a fragment of marble, worn and cracked in many places, but on which can still be clearly made out two maidens holding each a flower in her hand. Both are beautiful figures; they were young when Greece was young. They say it was the age of perfect beauty. The sculptor who has left us their image represents them in profile, offering each other one of those lotus flowers that were deemed sacred. In the blue cups of their blossoms the world quaffed oblivion of the ills of life. Our men of learning have given much thought

to these two maidens. They have turned over many books to find out about them, big books, bound some in parchment, others in vellum, and many in pig-skin; but they have never fathomed the reason why the two beautiful maidens hold up a flower in their hands.

What they could not discover after so much labour and thought, so many arduous days and sleepless nights, Mademoiselle Suzanne knew in a moment.

Her papa had taken her to the Louvre, where he had business. Mademoiselle Suzanne looked wonderingly at the antiques, and seeing gods with missing arms and legs and heads, she said to herself: "Ah! yes, these are the grown-up gentlemen's dolls; I see now gentlemen break their dollies the same as little girls do." But when she came to the two maidens who, each of them, hold a flower, she threw them a kiss, because they looked so charming. Then her father asked her:

"Why do they give each other a flower?"

And Suzanne answered at once:

"To wish each other a happy birthday."

Then, after thinking a moment, she added:

"They have the same birthday; they are both alike and they are offering each other the same flower. Girl friends should always have the same birthday."

Now Suzanne is far away from the Louvre and the old Greek marbles; she is in the kingdom of the birds and the flowers. She is spending the bright spring days in the meadows under shelter of the woods. She plays in the grass, and that is the sweetest sort of play. She remembers to-day is her little friend Jacqueline's birthday; and so she is going to pick flowers which she will give Jacqueline, and kiss her.

FISHING

EAN set out betimes in the morning with his sister Jeanne, a fishing-pole over his shoulder and a basket on his arm. It is holiday time and the school is shut; that is why Jean goes off every day with his sister Jeanne, a rod over his shoulder and a basket on his arm, along the river bank. Jean is a Tourainer, and Jeanne a lass of Touraine. The river is Tourainer too. It runs crystal-clear between silvery sallows under a moist, mild sky. Morning and evening white mists trail over the grass of the water-meadows. But Jean and Jeanne love the river neither for the greenery of its banks nor its clear waters that mirror the heavens. They love it for the fish in it. They stop presently at the most likely place, and Jeanne sits down under a pollard willow. Laying down his

baskets, Jean unwinds his tackle. This is very primitive — a switch, with a piece of thread and a bent pin at the end of it. Jean supplied the rod, Jeanne gave the line and the hook; so the tackle is the common property of brother and sister. Both want it all to themselves, and this simple contrivance, only meant to do mischief to the fishes, becomes the cause of domestic broils and a rain of blows by the peaceful riverside. Brother and sister fight for the free use of the rod and line. Jean's arm is black and blue with pinches and Jeanne's cheek scarlet from her brother's slaps. At last, when they were tired of pinching and hitting, Jean and Jeanne consented to share amicably what neither could appropriate by force. They agreed that the rod should pass alternately from the brother's hands to the sister's after each fish they caught.

Jean begins. But there's no knowing when he will end. He does not break the treaty openly, but he shirks its consequences by a mean trick. Rather than have to hand over the tackle to his sister, he refuses to catch the

fish that come, when they nibble the bait and set his float bobbing.

Jean is artful; Jeanne is patient. She has been waiting six hours. But at last she seems tired of doing nothing. She yawns, stretches, lies down in the shade of the willow, and shuts her eyes. Jean spies her out of one corner of his, and he thinks she is asleep. The float dives. He whips out the line, at the end of which gleams a flash of silver. A gudgeon has taken the pin.

"Ah! it's my turn now," cries a voice behind him.

And Jeanne snatches the rod.

THE PENALTIES OF GREATNESS

T was to go and see their friend Jean that Roger, Marcel, Bernard, Jacques, and Étienne set out along the broad highroad that winds like a handsome yellow riband through the fields and meadows.

Now they are off. They start all abreast; it is the best way. Only there is one defect in the arrangement this time; Étienne is too little to keep up.

He tries hard and puts his best foot foremost. His short legs stretch their widest. He swings his arms into the bargain. But he is too little; he cannot go as fast as his companions. He falls behind because he is too small; it is no use.

The big boys, who are older, should surely wait for him, you say, and suit their pace to

his. So they should, but they don't. Forward! cry the strong ones of this world, and they leave the weaklings in the lurch. But hear the end of the story. All of a sudden our four tall, strong, sturdy friends see something jumping on the ground. It jumps because it is a frog, and it wants to reach the meadow along the roadside. The meadow is froggy's home, and he loves it; he has his residence there beside a brook. He jumps, and jumps.

He is a green frog, and he looks like a leaf that is alive. Now the lads are in the meadow; very soon they feel their feet sinking in the soft ground where the rank grass grows. A few steps more, and they are up to their knees in mud. The grass hid a swamp underneath.

They just manage to struggle out. Shoes, socks, calves are all as black as ink. The fairy of the green field has put gaiters of mire on the four bad boys.

Étienne comes up panting for breath. He hardly knows, when he sees them in this pickle, if he should be glad or sorry. His

simple little heart is filled with a sense of the catastrophes that befall the great and strong. As for the four muddy urchins, they turn back piteously the way they came, for how can they, I should like to know, how can they go and see their friend Jean with their shoes and stockings in this state? When they get home again, their mothers will know how naughty they have been by the evidence of their legs, while little Étienne's innocence will be legible on his sturdy little stumps.

A CHILD'S DINNER PARTY

HAT fun it is playing at dinner parties! You can have a very plain dinner or a very elaborate one, just as you like. You can manage it with nothing at all. Only you have to pretend a great deal then.

Thérèse and her little sister Pauline have asked Pierre and Marthe to a dinner in the country. Proper invitations have been issued, and they have been talking about it for days. Mamma has given her two little girls good advice — and good things to eat, too. There will be nougat and sweet cakes, and a chocolate cream. The table will be laid in the arbour.

"If only it will be fine!" cries Thérèse, who is nine now. At her age one knows the fondest hopes are often disappointed in this world and you cannot always do what you

propose. But little Pauline has none of these worries. She cannot think it will be wet. It will be fine, because she wants it to.

And lo! the great day has broken clear and sunny. Not a cloud in the sky. The two guests have come. How fortunate! For this was another subject of anxiety for Thérèse. Marthe had caught a cold, and perhaps she would not be better in time. As for little Pierre, everybody knows he always misses the train. You cannot blame him for it. It is his misfortune, not his fault. His mother is unpunctual by nature. Everywhere and always little Pierre arrives after everybody else; he has never in his life seen the beginning of anything. This has given him a dull, resigned look.

The dinner is served; ladies and gentlemen, take your places! Thérèse presides. She is thoughtful and serious; the housewifely instinct is awaking in her bosom. Pierre carves valiantly. Nose in the dish and elbows above his head, he struggles to divide the leg of a chicken. Why, his feet even take their part in the tremendous effort. Mademoiselle

Marthe eats elegantly, without any ado or any noise, just like a grown-up lady. Pauline is not so particular; she eats how she can and as much as she can.

Thérèse, now serving her guests, now one of them herself, is content; and contentment is better than joy. The little dog Gyp has come to eat up the scraps, and Thérèse thinks, as she watches him crunching the bones, that dogs know nothing of all the dainty ways that make grown-up dinners, and children's too, so refined and delightful.

sails of the windmills to go round. He is proud of himself. He glories in his work, as true artists do, — as God did.

But he has forgotten the kitten playing on the floor beside him with a ball of thread. The moment Michel leaves the room, the little animal will jump up on the table and with a knock of its white paw upset the ink-pot over the papers. Thus will perish Michel's masterpiece. The artist will be down-hearted at first. But soon he will produce another masterpiece to make good the wrong done him by the kitten and cruel fate. So talent rises victorious over ill fortune.

JACQUELINE AND MIRAUT

ACQUELINE and Miraut are old friends. Jacqueline is a little girl, and Miraut is a big dog. They are of the same world, they are both country bred; hence their profound sympathy. How long have they known each other? They cannot tell; it goes beyond a dog's memory and beyond a little girl's. Besides, they don't need to know; they have no wish and no need to know anything. All the idea they have is that they have been friends for a very long time, since the beginning of things; for they cannot conceive, either of them, that the universe existed before their time. The world, as they imagine it, is young, simple, and artless as themselves. Jacqueline sees Miraut and Miraut sees Jacqueline right in the middle of it.

Miraut is far bigger and stronger than Jacqueline. When he puts his fore-paws on the child's shoulders, he towers a whole head and

chest above her. He could eat her up in three mouthfuls; but he knows, he feels a virtue is in her, and that, small as she is, she is precious. He admires, he loves her. He licks her face out of pure affection. Jacqueline loves him because he is strong and kind. She has a great respect for him. She notices that he knows many secrets she does not, and that the mysterious genius of the earth is in him. She reveres him as men in olden days, under another sky, revered rustic, hairy gods of the woods and fields.

But one day she has a strange surprise that alarms, amazes her; she sees her venerated divinity, her genius of the earth, her hairy god, Miraut, tied by a long leash to a tree, beside the well. She gazes and wonders. Miraut looks at her out of his honest, patient eyes. Not knowing he is a divinity, a shaggy god, he wears his chain and collar without resentment. But Jacqueline hesitates, she dares not go nearer. She cannot understand her divine and mysterious friend being a prisoner, and a vague sadness fills her childish soul.

THE END

JOCASTA & THE FAMISHED CAT

NOTE

HEN, in 1879, Monsieur France published *Jocaste et Le Chat Maigre,* his first work of fiction, it contained a preface comprising a dedicatory letter addressed to Monsieur Charles Edmond and a story entitled *André.* The latter, when, in 1885, he put together his book, *Le Livre de mon Ami,* was transferred to the new volume. The former disappeared from the later editions of *Jocaste.* As nothing that comes from the great writer's pen can fail to interest, the dedicatory letter is here reproduced, with a word or two on the modifications introduced into the story on its introduction into its new environment. A translation of *André* will be found in its proper place in the translation by Mr. J. Lewis May of *Le Livre de mon Ami* which will follow closely upon the appearance of the present volume. The letter is as follows:—

DEAR SIR,—I should have liked to offer you some inspiring tale such as you yourself know so well how to present. *Jocaste,* which is what I bring for your acceptance, is steeped in violence and un-

rest. It is a sinister story, and even the best among the persons concerned in it are not altogether immaculate.

I have appended to it a little chronicle which we will, if you are agreeable, entitle *Le Chant Maigre,* and in which you will encounter none but the scatter-brained. One of the most gifted writers of the century once remarked to a sober-minded acquaintance, "No one who is sane affords me much amusement." May my lunatics bring with them to your fireside an hour's philosophical entertainment!

How much better inspired were you on that All Souls' Day when, in some hamlet in Alsace, you overtook an old forester and an elderly schoolmaster! They each of them bore a wreath which they set on a grave; and then, being alone in the world on that day of hallowed memories, beneath a gloomy storm-rent sky, they went off to sup together at the forester's hut.

You stole unawares into the secret recesses of their sturdy simplicity, and all that you record of their conversation is helpful and gives a feeling of that beatific refreshment—*dulce refrigerium*—which the early Christians invoke on their sepulchral marbles at Rome.

Your schoolmaster and forester, although disciplined by age and the labours of life, have yet unwittingly preserved tender hearts stored with joyous recollections. The poets tell us of hoary oaks whose hollows shelter swarms of bees so that their rugged rind drops honey. The memory of your worthy dominie is packed with touching and artless anecdotes. Above all about a little girl the mention of whom carries him outside himself and some of

whose admirable sayings he quotes. I should like to chronicle one of them for the benefit of those who may read this letter after you.

"I set the little one on her feet again" (it is the schoolmaster who is speaking), "and hand in hand we resumed our way together. Something impelled me at the moment to confide to her the misfortune I had just sustained. 'No more holiday-making to-day, my pet,' I said to her finally; 'we are in mourning. My brother—you knew him well, he loved you dearly, he used to bring you toys—now he lies dead. He will be laid under the sod. Do not cry, my darling; it is only I who need cry. Yes, he is dead. But there! Each one in his turn! As to the *fête,* we will put it off till next year. You will lose nothing by waiting.' The child stopped short, and fixing her big terrified blue eyes on me said:

" 'Next year, then, your brother will not be dead any longer?' "[1]

How this question, in its simple directness and sublime ignorance, pierces to our very marrow! At Bellevue there is a little creature, appropriately nicknamed the Elephant, since no longer ago than last year she could have been hidden with ease in her godmother's muff, whose childish prattle is interspersed with utterances of as profound significance as this that you have so skillfully put on record.

A simple tale about a child has come to my ears which it would have gratified me to dedicate to you. But, alas, well as I am instructed as to its minutest

[1] The day after All Saints' Day—(*Le lendemain de la Toussaint*) in the *Revue Alsacienne,* May 1878.

details it will never be written by me. It would recall in more than one feature the delightful scenes at the Rookery at Blunderstone, and my characters, truthful as they might be, would grow pale and dwindle to vain shadows beside the ever charming inmates of Dickens' cottage. After all, since I am only talking to you just now, I can very well tell you this story that will never be written. Here it is.

The tale is about the charming widow of a clever young surgeon, sprung from the peasantry, and her little boy André. The child, as he grows, loses flesh and colour, so his mother resolves for his sake to pay a visit to his grandparents in their humble little farmhouse, and mother and child are received with open arms, the child in particular making a complete conquest of the old folks. The best bedroom was allotted to the Parisian visitors, a room which the grandparents had never occupied since their bridal night.

At this point in the reprinted story the author has, for some reason, struck out the following paragraph:—

The two old people slept as they were accustomed to do in the downstairs room behind the curtain that hung from the beam of the staircase. Madame Trévière's nurse made her way timorously up a steep ladder into the attic, where she slept surrounded by onions.

The advent of the lovely young mother flutters the heart of a wealthy manufacturer, a patron of Millet and the Barbizon school, Philippe Lassalle, and he pays assiduous court to her. Little André instinctively recognizes the menace of the interloper and exerts all his potent influence against the success of Lassalle. One night, when the child is being put to bed, he says, "Mamma, I'm afraid." At this point again the author has cut out a few words, for in the earlier version André continues:—

"I like being afraid. It's nice. It's like swimming"—swimming being in his customary talk his most forcible description of a pleasant sensation.

This adoption of an expression for which he made a meaning of his own is so eminently childlike a touch that it seems a thousand pities to have cut out the passage.

The widow sits by the child's cot and muses over a letter in which Lassalle has asked her to marry him, when the child stirs in his sleep and inquires whether his dead father can come back again. Being told no, he declares that he is glad because he loves his mother so much that he has no love left over for his father if he should come back.

The mother soothes him, saying, "Sleep on; he will not come back."

And then, perhaps desirous that the tale should not too closely resemble the chronicle of the early troubles of David Copperfield, Monsieur France closed his story thus:—

He will not come back. Monsieur Lassalle no longer nurses any hope. His appeal has met with a rebuff. Of an evening in his room hung with landscapes and bits of still-life, with his feet on the bars, as he fills his pipe and mixes his grog, he reflects that winter evenings are sufficiently gloomy when one sits alone. He has not seen the widow since; but when his friends ask him what has become of her, he answers bravely in a cheerful tone that disguises his profound disappointment, "She is still the beautiful Madame Trévière: more so than ever."

In fitting the tale into *Le Livre de mon Ami,* however, the author found a way to remove the widow's scruples without hinting at any Murdstone-like proclivities on the part of Monsieur Lassalle. In the later version the story ends thus:—

Nevertheless, when two months were over, he did not come back, and he came back with the broad, sun-burnt features of Monsieur Lassalle, the new master of the house. And little André began to grow sallow and thin and listless.

He is cured again now. He loves his nurse with the love he used to bestow on his mother; but he doesn't know his nurse has got a young man.

The letter to Monsieur Edmond is then resumed as follows:—

There, in a few strokes, is the tale I shall never write. It is true. Accept, in default of better, the tales I *have* written, I hardly know how, or why. The narrator is like that inamorata of the old poet Mellin de Sainct-Gelais who had more moons in her head[1] than there are gondolas at Venice. I most certainly had a red moon[2] in my brain when I recast from unimpeachable materials the narrative which owes its title, *Jocaste,* to a circumstance as simple as it is singular. As for the moon that "governed" the *Chat Maigre,* it was the one that rises ruddily over the roofs of Paris. About this last there is nothing either mysterious or terrible. I beg you to accept these two tales as a feeble testimony of my gratitude and affection. A. F.

[1] *Avoir la lune dans la tête* = To be a little mad.—LITTRÉ.

The use of a corresponding idiom is rendered impracticable by the author's subsequent play upon the word *lune.*

[2] *Lune rousse* = The April moon which gardeners assert turns young leaves and buds red: the effects it is said to produce are attributable to a nocturnal fall in the temperature.—LITTRÉ.

CONTENTS

PAGE

JOCASTA 1

THE FAMISHED CAT 133

JOCASTA

JOCASTA

CHAPTER I

HAT! Monsieur Longuemare, you put live frogs into your pocket? How disgusting!"

"When I get back to my room Mademoiselle, I shall nail one of them on a small board and lay bare his mesentery, having first excited it with a pair of delicate pincers."

"But the poor frog will endure tortures."

"That depends. It would suffer more, for instance, in the summer than in the winter. And if its mesentery should be inflamed, perhaps, because of some anterior lesion, the pain would be so intense that its heart would cease to beat."

"What good can it do you to hurt an animal like that?"

"It helps me to construct my experimental theory of pain. I shall prove that the Stoics did not know what they were talking about, and that Zeno was an idiot. You don't know who Zeno was? Well, don't seek to make his acquaintance. He denied the reality of sensation, whereas I maintain that

sensation is everything. You will possess an exact and sufficient notion of the Stoics when I tell you they were dull maniacs, who affectedly pretended to despise suffering. If I had one of the barbarians under my tweezers in the place of my frog, he would quickly find out if one can suppress suffering by an effort of the will. Besides, it is a good thing for living beings to be endowed with the faculty for suffering."

"You must be joking. In what way can it be good to be able to suffer?"

"It is a necessary safeguard. If, for example, the flames did not scorch us intolerably when we go too near the fire, we should be roasted to the bone without knowing it."

He gazed at her.

"And," he added, after a moment, "pain is beautiful. Richet says, 'There is such a strong affinity between intelligence and suffering, that the most intelligent beings are the most susceptible to pain.' "

"So naturally you think you are more capable of suffering than anyone else. I would ask you to describe your sufferings to me, if I were not afraid of being indiscreet."

"I have already told you, Mademoiselle, that Zeno was a fool. If I were in great pain I should scream. As for you, you have a most delicate

organisation—your nerves are like sensitive strings; you present pain with a sonorous instrument, an eight octave keyboard on which it could play, if it chose, the most elaborate and complicated variations."

"Which in plain language means I am to be very unhappy. You are insupportable; one never knows if you are speaking seriously or not. And your ideas are so extraordinary that the little I understand of them makes me giddy. Will you answer me properly and sensibly, if you can, for once in your life? Is it true that you are leaving us and going very far away?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, it is true. I have bidden an eternal farewell to Val de Grâce.[1] I shall prescribe no more cooling draughts for the patients there. It is by my own request that I have been removed from the hospital staff and appointed assistant doctor in Cochin-China. I made up my mind on this point, as I do on all others, after most mature reflexion—you smile, you think I am frivolous. I will tell you my reasons for leaving France. First and foremost, I shall escape the tyranny of *concierges,* charwomen, landladies, waiters, old-clothes men, and all such inveterate enemies of domestic happiness. I shall no longer have to bear with the smile of the café waiter—by-the-bye, have you noticed that waiters

[1] The military hospital in Paris.

always have magnificently shaped heads? This is a very acute observation, but it would be useless to develop to you the theories it suggests. I am going far from the Boulevard Saint-Michel, but I shall find at Shanghai osteological monuments which will enable me to finish my treatise on the dentition of the yellow races. I shall lose that bright colour, which according to you is the proof of insolent good health, and take on the more interesting appearance of a lemon whose days are numbered. I shall develop complicated disorders of the liver, and study them with lively curiosity. You must own that all this is worth the voyage?"

Thus spoke René Longuemare, assistant surgeon of the First Division, standing in a suburban garden that surrounded a small chalet. Before him was a lawn, a fountain with an artificial grotto, a Judas-tree, and holly bushes growing against the railings; beyond the garden, in the distance, lay the beautiful valley, with the Seine winding on the left between pale green banks, crossed on the right by the white line of an aqueduct, and disappearing into that immensity of roofs, steeples, and domes which is Paris. In the hazy distance the gilded rotunda of the Invalides flung back the rays of sunlight. It was a warm, blue day in July; a few little white clouds hung motionless in the sky.

The girl to whom René Longuemare was speaking sat in an iron garden-chair. She raised her great clear eyes to the young surgeon's face, but remained silent—a somewhat sad, uncertain expression on her lips.

Her eyes, of an indefinite colour, were timid, but at the same time so languorous that the whole face they illuminated acquired a singular expression of sensuousness, though her nose was straight and her cheeks slightly hollow.

She was so uniformly pale that other women in speaking of her were wont to say, "The girl has no complexion." Her mouth was too large and somewhat flaccid, but showed facility and benevolent instincts.

René Longuemare, with a visible effort, recommenced his detestable joking.

"No," he said; "I must own up, Mademoiselle; in leaving France I am running away from my bootmaker. I can't stand his German accent any longer."

She asked him again if he was really going. He ceased smiling abruptly, and said:

"I am taking the train to-morrow morning, at seven fifty-five, and on the twenty-sixth I go aboard the steamship *Magenta* at Toulon."

He could hear the sound of the ivory billiard

balls clicking against each other on the table, and from the chalet came a voice, with a strong southern intonation, proclaiming emphatically:

"Seven, fourteen."

He flung a hurried look through the glass doors at the players, frowned, and with a somewhat brusque farewell to the young girl, turned swiftly away, his face distorted and his eyes brimming with tears. The girl saw him thus for a moment in profile above the holly hedge, behind the iron lances of the railings. She rose and ran to the gate, her handkerchief pressed to her mouth as though to stifle a cry; then resolutely she stretched out her arms and called in a strangled voice:

"René!"

Her arms dropped to her side; it was too late, he did not hear.

She leaned her head against an iron bar. Her drawn features, the abandonment of her whole being, showed irreparable defeat. The southern voice called from the chalet:

"Hélène! the madeira."

It was Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac calling to his daughter. He was standing, his little figure drawn up to its full height before the board on which the billiard players marked their score by means of wooden rings strung on wires. With a wide, magnificent gesture he rubbed the end of his cue with

chalk, his eyes sparkled beneath their thick bushy brows. He looked capable and well satisfied, although he had just been badly beaten at the game.

"Mr. Haviland," he said to his guest, "I am particularly anxious that my daughter herself should do us the honours of my madeira. I am like that, you see, patriarchal and biblical. Being an islander, I think you are especially qualified to appreciate good wine in general, and madeira in particular. Taste this, I beg you."

Mr. Haviland turned his dull eyes on Hélène and silently took the glass she offered him on a lacquered tray. He was a long personage, with long teeth and long feet—carroty, bald, and dressed in checked clothes. He wore a racing glass slung from his shoulder by a strap.

Hélène disappeared. She had looked at her father uneasily. She had appeared disturbed at hearing him pour forth his voluble politenesses. She sent word to say she was not feeling well, and wished to be excused appearing at dinner.

Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac filled the dining-room, which was painted like a boulevard café, with his noisy presence, fussily carving, passing dishes, pouring out wine, calling in loud tones for the fish-slice when it was just under his eyes, trying the edge of the knife with the gravity of a charlatan at a fair,

and tucking his serviette high up in his waistcoat. He boasted of his wines, and talked for ten minutes about a certain dry syracuse before uncorking it.

The gardener, a type of the suburban peasant hired by the year, waited at table. He was a sly, malicious-looking creature, who answered back when his master spoke to him, although the latter pretended not to notice his impertinence.

Mr. Haviland, a high-coloured, florid man, ate a great deal, became very red in the face, but did not change his melancholy expression, and hardly spoke.

Fellaire de Sisac, after declaring that he did not intend to talk about business, proceeded to expatiate on his principal operations. He was a commission agent, and found his clients mostly among landlords and shopkeepers whose property had been expropriated. The new streets and boulevards which were being so rapidly opened up by Monsieur Haussmann gave him plenty to do.

He must, as a matter of fact, have made a good deal of money in a short time (although he did not say so). For many years he was to be seen daily, with a portfolio under his arm, dragging his down-at-heel boots about the neighbourhood of the Rue Rambuteau. There in a dingy office at the end of a courtyard he held consultations with sundry pork-butchers in distress.

It was in this unhealthy place that he developed

the pale, puffy cheeks which thenceforth hung down on either side of his face.

On the brass plate affixed to his door his name appeared first as "Fellaire," followed by the words "de Sisac" in parenthesis, as indicating his birthplace:—

"Fellaire (de Sisac)."

On a new plate above the threshold of a new domicile, the parenthesis was replaced by a comma after the first name:—

"Fellaire, de Sisac."

On the third plate, put after a third removal, the comma was suppressed, and there was nothing to indicate its having once existed:—

"Fellaire de Sisac."

Now there was no plate on the commission agent's door. He occupied, when in town, an apartment ornamented with much looking-glass, on the first floor of a house in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs; besides which he built for himself, as a country residence, the chalet at Meudon.

Monsieur Fellaire was a native of Sisac, near Saint-Mamet-la-Salvétat, in the department of Cantal, where his brother, the miller, still lived.

When Fellaire de Sisac learnt that a portion of that part of Paris, known as the Butte-des-Moulins

or Windmill Hill, had to come down, so as to open up the approach to the Théâtre Français, he sent out cards, prospectuses, and circulars, and made visits to the owners and principal tradespeople of the condemned houses. On one of what he spoke of as his "rounds" he called on Mr. Haviland, who lived at the Hôtel Meurice, and was the proprietor of a large house situated at the foot of the Butte, near the theatre. This house had belonged to the Haviland family for nearly two centuries.

John Haviland, the banker, established offices there in 1789. He had placed considerable sums of money at the disposition of the Duke of Orleans, who would, he considered, surely succeed Louis XVI. if the French were, as he thought, tending towards a constitutional monarchy. But the plans of the ambitious banker were not furthered either by the violent march of events or by the naturally wavering duke, who went back to the royal cause and favoured the counter-revolution.

Haviland then put himself in communication with the queen through the intervention of the beautiful Mrs. Elliot, but on the tenth of August, after the definite fall of royalty, he was obliged to fly to England, though he remained in communication with the Duke of Brunswick and the princes. His cashier, David Ewart, a man then eighty-one years of age, insisted on remaining in Paris to look

after the threatened interests of the bank. Not having been able to obtain a certificate of citizenship, and so looked on as "suspect," he was arrested and taken to the Conciergerie, where for over four months he seemed to be forgotten. Finally, on the 1st Thermidor 1794, he was haled before the revolutionary tribunal, which condemned him to capital punishment as a conspirator, and he was guillotined the same day at the Barrière du Trône, then called the Barrière Renversée.

Haviland's bank was saved from ruin by the energetic fidelity of this old man, but the house on the Butte-des-Moulins ceased to be one of its branches, and was let for other purposes.

It was very black and dirty when marked for the pickaxe. The windows to the front were surmounted by the Louis XV. shell, and a head wearing a helmet still grimaced heroically above the keystone of the arch of the courtyard door; but it was squeezed between the mural signs of a dyer and cleaner and a locksmith, and was paintd blue on one side and yellow on the other. To the right and left of the door, and under the archway, hung little boards displaying the names of copyists and dressmakers. Within, the stone staircase, with its magnificent balluster of wrought iron, was befouled with dust, spittle, and dead salad leaves, and permeated by an acrid alkaline smell. The squalling

of children was audible on the landings, and through the half-open doors could be seen women in bed-gowns and men in shirt-sleeves, the undress of the worker or the loafer.

Such was the Haviland house in its last days.

Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac, being entrusted with the interests of the owner, visited it. He noted that it possessed thirty yards of frontage, two shops with offices and dependencies, and afforded shelter besides to thirty-two trading enterprises of divers sorts, with their appurtenances, including a female costermonger who kept her barrow in the coach-house, and a sempstress who stitched at a sewing-machine in the garret.

A detailed account of the whole was given in a report destined to impress a due sense of its immense value on the Council of Indemnities, appointed by the city to satisfy expropriated landlords. If, as was not unlikely, the affair should come before a competent tribunal, de Sisac was to arrange with barrister and lawyer.

He invited Haviland to dine with him first in Paris and afterwards at Meudon; for he was hospitable to all his clients, partly from inclination, partly from policy. He could manage men better from behind a decanter, and became most persuasive at dessert. He was convivial, and liked opening bottles.

"This is life," he would say. In the less prosper-

ous epochs of his existence he treated his customers to roast chestnuts and white wine on the oilcloth covered tables of some small café. This was in the days of consultations with embarrassed shopkeepers. Now he received his clients in his own house with his own silver and linen marked with his initials.

The last red rays of the setting sun lighted up the dining-room of the chalet where Haviland and de Sisac sat over their coffee, the business man with his pendulous cheeks was watching his guest narrowly.

"Just try this brandy, dear islander," he said.

The appellation *insulaire* seemed to him an elegant synonym for Englishman. He would sometimes speak of Albion instead of England, though he admitted that this was a little romantic.

Haviland drank the brandy, asked for a glass of wine, and then said:

"I hope that Mademoiselle Fellaire is not seriously indisposed?"

De Sisac said he hoped so also, and Haviland relapsed into his usual silence.

At last he rose with an English awkwardness accentuated by arthritis, for his knees were crippled with this rheumatic affliction. With his yellow overcoat over his arm, he had already passed through the garden gate, when he spoke again.

"I have the honour," he said to his host, "to ask you for the hand of your daughter, Mademoiselle Fellaire."

The little man was probably about to make some adroit but petulant reply, when the Englisman put a paper into his hand.

"You will find there," he said, "an exact account of my fortune. Let me have your answer by registered letter, please. Do not accompany me any farther. No."

And he walked off stiffly towards the railway station.

Fellaire though not easily surprised, was startled. He trotted at a sprightly pace twelve times round the fountain before he could recover his composure, the moon shining on his fat inert face gave it the appearance of a mask.

"What?" he said; "this man who is no more to me than the two hundred other strangers I come into contact with in the course of the year; this man who has seen my daughter perhaps half-a-dozen times, and who scarcely opens his mouth, opens it now to make her a proposal of marriage! I wonder if it is Hélène who has arranged this little comedy for two actors so deftly? But no, I'm no fool; I know what is going on in my house, and I don't believe the poor child has spoken more

than four words to him. I'm afraid she will not receive this proposition as she ought to."

He stood still, biting his thumb, gazing fixedly ahead like a man measuring some obstacle; then he turned deliberately back to the chalet. He stopped in the dining-room and read the paper Haviland had given him, before going upstairs to his daughter's room. He put his cigar down on the pink chintz of the mantelpiece, and drew a chair to the bedside. He might have been the family doctor as he asked:

"Well, and how are we now, my pet?"

As she did not answer, he added:

"Mr. Haviland inquired after you this evening in the most affectionate manner."

Then, after a pause, he went on in the unctuous voice of a man who has dined well.

"What do you think of him?"

No answer came to his question, but by the light of the candle burning on the mantelpiece he could see her eyes were open and staring, her brows contracted with an air of painful reflexion. He judged rightly that she had guessed Haviland's intentions, and no longer afraid of striking too sudden a blow, said:

"Mr. Haviland has made you an offer of marriage."

"I don't want to marry; I am quite happy with you."

He settled himself more comfortably in the easy-chair, arranged his hands on his knees, drew a whistling breath through his throat, husky with spirits but soothed with sweetmeats, and said in a businesslike tone:

"You don't ask me what my answer was, little girl?"

"Well, what was it?"

"My child, I said nothing which could in any way bind you. I want to leave you entirely free. I don't consider that I have a right to impose my will on you. You know well enough I'm no tyrant."

She sat up, her elbow on the pillow.

"No, you are a dear father, and if I don't want to be married you won't force me to be."

"I tell you again, child," he said good-naturedly, "you are as free as air, but we can discuss these little matters. I am your father, I love you, and there are lots of things you are old enough now to understand. Come, let's talk it over like a pair of friends. We live together, you and I, and we live very comfortably; but we have not got what could be called a settled fortune. I am a self-made man, and success came to me late—too late. Much water will flow under the bridge before I can provide a dowry for you; and between this and then,

who knows what may happen? You are twenty-two, and the offer you have had to-day is not to be despised. It is an extraordinary piece of luck, if I may say so. Haviland is not what one would call a young man. You see, my girl, I am quite impartial; but he is a gentleman, a real gentleman. He is very rich."

With his mouth full, as it were, of this last word, he slapped the pocket in which was the paper the Englishman had given him, and went on, warming to the subject:

"This devil of a Haviland has the command of a magnificent fortune—houses, forests, farms, stocks and shares, everything."

She shrugged her shoulders with a disgusted look, and he saw he had put things rather too brutally.

"Don't imagine, child, that I want you to marry for money as they say; no, I love you and I only want you to be happy"

He really did love his daughter, and paternal affection made his voice tremble.

"God is my witness that I only want your happiness. I know what sentiment is; when I married your mother she hadn't a penny. To tell you the truth I am really a dreamer, a sentimentalist. I am very romantic at bottom. Do you know what I should have liked better than anything, if circumstances had permitted?—to live in the country and

write poetry! But there, I was caught, body and soul, by business. Now I am dragged into it up to my neck. Good Lord! life isn't all rose-coloured, one has to make certain sacrifices. Well, well, my girl, my dream has always been to spare you such sacrifices, to shield you from the troubles and miseries of existence. It is enough that your poor mother should have had to endure them, and die at the task—die at the task! Do you hear me?"

He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, much moved by the memory he had conjured up—as a matter of fact, his wife died of consumption at Niort, where her family lived, and where he had sent her to be out of the way; but he was intoxicated and maudlin with his own eloquence. He took his daughter's face between his hands, covered it with kisses and burst forth again:

"Listen to me, my Lili. I know you, and I know you *must* have comfort, luxury even. It is my fault. I have been too ambitious. Nothing was too good or too fine for you. I have brought you up as a rich man's child. You haven't learnt how to wait on yourself or to keep accounts. If you are not well off you will surely be the most miserable of women, and it will be my fault. What a responsibility for your poor father! I should die of it. But here is Fortune knocking at your door, hey? Little girl, shall we let her in? See now; I love

you—I adore you, my darling, but I know what is best for you. Love is never deceived. Let me settle this."

Hélène asked in a careless tone if Mr. Haviland intended to live in Paris.

"Yes, certainly," answered de Sisac, though he knew nothing whatever of Haviland's plans. He added that his future son-in-law had elegant manners, and was still capable of turning the head of many a young woman. As to his feelings, they were most delicate, . . . it was difficult to imagine any one with such delicate feelings. Finally, as a last resource, he spoke of an hotel, carriages, and jewels.

Hélène was thinking that René Longuemare had gone, far away and for a long time, without a word of love, without a word of regret. If he had only said he would come back, that he would think of her—remember her. But no, he had said nothing. Evidently, then, he did not care for her. He only cared for his books, his phials, his scalpels, and his tweezers. He had liked her because she had been so willing to listen to him, that was all. He had said a thousand silly things to her, as he would to any girl. But supposing he cared for her secretly, as she had often thought? Well, it would be a just revenge for his desertion. What her father said was true; she was made to be rich, she had a vocation for the luxurious life. And how could

she resist? She was too tired to struggle; the first assault had overthrown her, and her father would return to the charge.

Hers was one of those souls which accept defeat in advance. Then, too, the love of this foreigner was flattering. She knew from certain indications how true and profound that love was: this man who was verging on the decline of life, who for twenty-five years had travelled all over the world without being able to dissipate his eternal *ennui;* this man, glacial towards every one else, had caught fire like a young man—he had known her for three months, and his visits to her had been almost silent, yet he offered her his hand and fortune; was he not strange, chivalrous, generous? Would it not be possible to love him! She raised her pretty face, with its undecided expression, towards her father and murmured:

"We will see."

CHAPTER II

ÉLÈNE FELLAIRE had been brought up, in many respects, as a rich man's daughter. It is true she could remember periods in her childhood when her stockings were in holes, when her feet were often cold, and the food seemed to consist principally of plates of sausage from the cook-shop, which she particularly detested; when she had to spend long hours waiting in courtyards and doorways while one of the many removals of their household goods was in progress, when in the winter evenings her mother's face grew downcast.

When she thought of her mother, it was of some one who was always singing or scolding, restlessly active, or completely broken down; some one who was always tormented or tormenting.

One of her recollections was of their travelling together, where to or exactly at what time she could not recall, but it was when she was very young. One night her mother, having put her to bed, turned her face to the wall and sternly told her to go to sleep. Then the poor lady took off her chemise and washed it in the basin. It amused

Hélène immensely to see her mother, rolled up in a shawl, busy among the soap-suds. Later on, when she understood that it was because they were too poor to pay a washerwoman, she felt frightened.

She was an affectionate, delicate creature from her infancy. Her heart would melt at the sight of suffering. She gave sweets and doll's clothes to poor children. She kept a sparrow in a cage and stuffed it with sugar; it was a source of joy and sorrow to her, for one day it perished miserably, crushed to death by a door.

"Praxo raised a tomb to her grasshopper, by whose death she learnt that all things must die."

Thus the poet of The Anthology makes the Ionian child speak.

The loss of the sparrow filled Hélène with a terror of death which did not leave her for many years.

Her father was a man with a winning tongue. He spent his money lavishly, and stayed out late at night, so that his wife, faded by poverty and ceaselessly shaken by jealousy, could not possess that quiet and peace of mind, that constant, watchful foresight parents need to enable them to direct skilfully and happily the appealing little souls they have brought into the world; so Hélène, hugged or smacked without knowing why, grew dull and stupid, and gave up trying to distinguish between right and wrong.

"This child will be the death of me!" Madame Fellaire would exclaim. "I don't know what I have done that God should have afflicted me with such a monster."

Then would follow a storm of vociferations, accompanied by sobs, clenched fists, and banging doors. The poor child used to creep away to bed and cry herself to sleep with a heavy heart. When morning came she would often be awakened by a shower of kisses, gentle words, and pretty little songs; her mother's mood having been changed and brightened by a few tardy attentions from Monsieur Fellaire.

As for him, to Hélène's mind he always appeared very handsome, very good, and very grand. His thick whiskers and his white waistcoats were marvels of elegance to her. Monsieur Fellaire was a god in his daughter's eyes, but after the manner of gods, showed himself rarely. He was away all day, and came home late. Sometimes, when things outside went against him, he would have bursts of domestic assiduity. On such occasions he would take his Lili driving, or to the Zoological Gardens, or to a café, where she drank sugared water and even syrups. She would dip the end of her tongue in her father's glass and grimace at the bitter taste of the green beverage. Such outings were delicious, but infrequent. The god faded away, leaving his

wife more sullen and more irritable than before, and Hélène, sitting by her in her little chair, would dream lovingly of him and recall the dazzling vision of his wonderful white waistcoat; she was lazy, and happiest doing nothing, an occupation in which she succeeded best of all. Madame Fellaire never noticed the long silent reveries of her daughter, but a peal of infantine laughter would make her break out in reproaches.

Hélène was keenly and precociously alive to sensation. She instinctively loved luxury, and did what she could to improve the paternal ordinary. Her liking for the delicacies of the table and the refinements of dress delighted Monsieur Fellaire, who was a connoisseur on both points.

She was seven years old when he put her to school at Auteuil, at the Convent of the Ladies of Mount Calvary. The white dresses and white faces of the Mothers, the peacefulness of the house and the unfailingly regular life, did her much good.

One day she was told that her mother, who had gone on a journey, would never return again. This "never again" frightened her—she sobbed bitterly. They dressed her in a black pinafore, and let her run loose in the garden. The garden was for her an immense mysterious country, full of living things—an enchanted world, a land of miracles. Her father came to see her there every week, and

brought her cakes; his love and fatherly pride were most admirable.

Tired as he was with uselessly tramping the pavements, with climbing painfully up and down stairs, knocking at doors only to have them shut in his face; of writing his letters on the corner of some dirty café table; of following up chance clients, sometimes even to the suburban balls they frequented, where he would treat them to a bowl of mulled wine; nosing like a hound after pettifogging law disputes, he would appear every Thursday in the parlour of the Ladies of Calvary, brushed up, shining, gloved, freshly shaved, and with immaculate linen. There he showed only as a being happy and at ease. His fat white cheeks were most presentable. Mother Sainte-Geneviève, the superior of the house at Auteuil, showed him much consideration. Two of the elder girls dreamt of him at night.

Hélène admired him immensely.

Truly Monsieur Fellaire was heroic in his own fashion. One day, when he had not a penny in his pocket, he saw the poems of Alfred de Musset on a friend's table and promptly borrowed the volume. "I want to re-read it for the hundredth time," he said, and went off and sold it on the *quais,* so as to buy the gloves he drew on carelessly next day, under the watchful eyes of the sister doorkeeper.

The cakes he took for Hélène and her friends on his weekly visits came from a celebrated pastry-cook's, and the sweets were in most tasteful boxes full of mottoes and surprises. Mother Sainte-Geneviève, having conceived a great esteem for him, consulted him one day on some litigious matter. He gladly placed his time, his activity, and his knowledge at her disposal. She deigned to accept them. He was radiant with joy and pride. Such was his desire to please, that he tied up his notes and papers with blue ribbon, and managed to treat even legal matters with a degree of unction. When he ran through these documents with the Reverend Mother, he moistened his thumb with the tip of his tongue in a discreet and modest manner. As a matter of fact, each consultation was torture to him, but it was a delicious torture. He would listen for hours together to the explanations of the good lady, who was at once narrow-minded, mistrustful, obstinate, and gentle, and who promptly slipped out of everything with an ease born of long practice. She was a fine fair woman, a little puffy perhaps, and kept her eyes cast down and her hands in her sleeves, and spoke in a low voice. These manners intimidated him. He was more at ease with his usual clients, suburban publicans and manufacturers of patent hygienic belts, who would fling a bundle of judgment orders and summonses down

on his roll-top desk, swearing horribly the while.

Mother Sainte-Geneviève had the grand manners of an abbess of the old régime. One of her affected elegances was to ignore the fact that Fellaire could ever need money. He was constantly called on to make advances to the Community, to obtain even the smallest of which involved strategy which would have turned an ordinary brain. But what a pleasure it was for him to go to Vespers on Sunday and sit in the gallery of the chapel, which smelt of incense and orris root, and from his place he could see his daughter in the aisle, bending over her prayer-book, seated between the daughter of a councillor of State and the cousin of a Montenegrin prince! After contemplating her pretty hair, and her shoulders, a little thin and pointed in her brown merino bodice, the glasses of his spectacles would grow misty, and he would blow his nose as one does at the theatre after a moving scene. The business of the Community cost him some money, but brought him many useful acquaintances.

"I am becoming the fashion," he said to himself, and his chest would swell with renewed ampleness beneath his fancy waistcoat, of white piqué, or printed, stamped, or spotted velvet.

As Hélène grew up, she grew beautiful. Her hair which for a long time had been like her mother's, pale and faded, turned to a magnificent

gold. She was gentle, slothful, easily discouraged, given to bursts of affection and sudden emotions. It was with difficulty they could coax her to eat anything in the refectory beyond salad and bread and salt. She had a friend, Cécile, at whose house she spent the half-holidays. This friend, the daughter of a stockbroker, was a little person of sixteen, at once childish, old-fashioned, and coquettish, neither ill-natured nor mischievous, too unimaginative to be vicious, and very rich. She had the mind of a dull woman of thirty, and her companions endowed her with an extraordinary prestige. She had a heavily upholstered bedroom in her father's house at Passy, and here she and Hélène would pass hours eating bonbons. When the latter left this stuffy nest, something in her soul had withered, the outside world seemed duller, harder, and more repulsive—her spirits flagged. Her day-dream was to have a blue bedroom and to lie on a sofa reading novels all day long. She developed pains in her chest which quite pulled her down. One night there was a wild scare in the convent. At the cry of "Fire! fire!" all the girls jumped out of bed and, rolled in blankets and petticoats, rushed pell-mell down the staircase. The little ones came last, with outstretched arms, shrieking and stumbling in their long night-dresses. It was soon discovered to be merely a false alarm. Mother Sainte-Geneviève

scolded the foolish creatures and congratulated Hélène on having had the good sense not to leave her bed. If she had not moved, it was from pure inertia and the species of cowardice with which she faced every incident of life. Things slipped by her, leaving her indifferent to her surroundings; she thought of nothing but dresses, jewels, horses, and boating excursions. She would burst into tears at the mention of her father's name.

She left the convent knowing how to enter a drawing-room and play a waltz on the piano. She found the paternal house completely refurnished; she was to do the honours of it, and she had her blue bedroom.

Her father treated her with the kindness and liberality of an old lover for a young mistress. He took her to the little theatres, and to supper after the play. He thought this was the right thing to do. It was a cruel awakening for her when she discovered that this good, easy father was not the perfect gentleman she had supposed him to be in the convent parlour. His manners, which were a mixture of those of a quack doctor and a commercial traveller, wounded her terribly. She had learnt good behaviour with the Ladies of Mount Calvary, and knew instinctively what was right and proper.

Her beauty attracted men, but their vivacious admiration only roused her indignation. Not one

among them proposed to marry her; they all resembled each other, and were all alike stupid and tiresome. Uneasy, affected, feverish, nail-biting creatures, they one and all seemed possessed with the desire to wear out their boots, their horses, and their lives as quickly as possible. Then came some one who interested her.

A young army surgeon, René Longuemare. He had been sent by his father, a road surveyor in the Ardennes, to consult Fellaire de Sisac on some matter of business; he returned again and again to the house in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs and became a constant visitor there.

Although he was not handsome, being clumsily built, with a high-coloured face, and although his conversation was rough and obscure, Hélène liked to see him, and to hear him talk. He would hold forth on matters of religion and morality in a way which made her hair stand on end, but which amused her, though she but half understood what he said.

"Man is descended from a monkey," he would say.

When she protested, he would develop his thesis in a way at once bold and comical.

Longuemare introduced some of his friends, and so a circle of young savants was formed in the

house of the good Fellaire, who paid not the slightest attention to them.

The surgeon would advance theories like the following:—

"Virtue is a product, the same as phosphorus or vitriol."

"Heroism and holiness are the results of congestion of the brain."

"General paralysis is the only thing which makes a great man."

"The gods are adjectives."

"Things have always existed and will always exist."

"How wicked of you!" she would say.

But she took pleasure in listening to the manly young voice. She admired, as a mysterious force, the free and expansive intelligence which, of an evening, between a cup of tea and a glass of kirsch, would fling pell-mell before her the eccentricity, the magnificence, and the horror of Nature, as a barbarian flings his tribute at the feet of a surprised and flattered queen. Meanwhile, from the salon came the murmur of doleful voices talking of unpaid notes of hand, of decisions of the Chamber of Commerce and disputed building accounts.

Then came a shadow, wandering silently among the divers groups—a big, stiff, red-headed shadow,

at once grotesque and noble. It was the troubled soul of Mr. Haviland. Hélène never confounded him with the others; she recognized that he possessed a certain nobility and distinction of mind, and she knew that he loved her, although he never spoke to her.

As for Longuemare, he was naïf, in spite of his scientific audacity; he respected her profoundly, and admired her in silence. After having made some great show of brutality, he would talk to her in the most gentle and delicate way. He was always gay in her presence, partly because it was his nature, and partly from strength of will, for he loved her; and rather than tell her so, he would have bitten his tongue through. He had only his pay, while waiting for something better to turn up. He never doubted but that Mademoiselle Fellaire was rich. She used to tease him, and pretend to believe that he was frivolous, and even worse; but she was becoming strongly and profoundly attached to him, until the day when he came to Meudon to bid her a brusque farewell.

CHAPTER III

HE house on the Butte-des-Moulins had fallen; the mask with its one blue and one yellow cheek had crumbled beneath the pickaxe. The little room where the old cashier David Ewart was arrested, to be taken to the revolutionary tribunal and the guillotine, had gone with the rest. For some time clouds of grey dust rose from the ruins and whirled about the neighbouring streets, carrying particles of the old dwelling down the throats of men and horses. Now those who had inhabited it—the dyer and cleaner and the locksmith among others—could not have exactly indicated the spot where it had stood.

The domain of Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac at Meudon had grown considerably larger. The railings which formerly were quite near the house had retreated so as to take in a piece of neighbouring land, on which immediately sprang up a summer-house built like a Gothic château, with towers, battlements, and portcullis in brick. The property was entitled the Villa de Sisac. The plaster was still fresh when one day a placard appeared on the gate, announcing that the house, the chalet, and

dependencies were to be let or sold immediately.

The seasons succeeded each other, and still the placard swung in the wind. The sun and the rain wrinkled it and turned it yellow.

Then in the autumn days the silence of desolation fell on the hills of Meudon. Then, with heavy tread, musket on shoulder, and leather helmet on head, the German soldiers entered the abandoned chalet and took up their quarters there. They made fires in the furnace with the polished planks of the *parquets*. The roof was crushed by a shell. The great winter had come. France was invaded —Paris besieged. In this crumbling away of a people, the fortune of Fellaire disappeared for ever.

The cessation of all municipal work after the resignation of the Prefect of the Seine, under the ministry of Chevandier de Valdrôme, had already shaken the office in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs to its foundations. Luck had forsaken Fellaire, and he let himself go with the stream. He gave up dyeing his whiskers, and wore dusty frockcoats and tortoiseshell-mounted spectacles. He would stake in gambling dens the stray louis he still picked up here and there. Now that his daughter no longer kept his house, he received visits from ladies with yellow hair and painted faces, who sang on the stairs. He was seen one day at the Folies-Bergères with a woman on each arm. Dur-

ing the siege of Paris he became serious again, and started an insurance company, "The Phœnix of the National Guard." But no one paid any attention to it.

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Hélène was married. She had been travelling for four years; the easy, careless life suited her. Tall, beautiful, dressed with a severe magnificence, she was much admired in hotels and casinos, where her indifference lent her an aristocratic air. She endeavoured to care for her husband. But though he was the most honourable and upright of men, he was terribly tiresome. He saw, heard, said and accomplished everything with equal gravity. Nothing was great or small in his eyes; everything was worthy of being taken into consideration. He would give his wife diamond ornaments, and then tease her childishly for ten hours about a sum of three francs which she could not account for. He made handsome presents in a narrow way, even his prodigalities wore an avaricious look. He interfered in all the extravagances of his young bride—not to check them, but to register them. He allowed her to spend lavishly, but on condition that she fulfilled every formality. A third of his life was spent in disputing about ha'pennies with hotel waiters. He was obstinately determined not to be robbed of a sou; and would willingly have ruined

himself to foil the would-be robber. He calculated everything—distances to within a yard, longitudes and latitudes, heights, the rise and fall of the barometer, the number of degrees marked on a thermometer, the direction of the wind, the position of the clouds. At Naples he surveyed Virgil's tomb like a land surveyor. He had a mania for neatness, and could not bear to see a newspaper open on a sofa. He exasperated Hélène by picking up and returning to her twenty times a day the book or embroidery which she had laid down. It made her think regretfully of her father, who would forget that he had put the stumps of his cigars on the damask arm-chairs. But all this was nothing.

Hélène's great trouble was being forced to live with a man so absolutely devoid of imagination. The faculty was so foreign to Mr. Haviland that he was incapable of describing a sentiment or giving any interest to a thought. Since their marriage he had never opened his mouth, except to enunciate some direct, precise, and timely fact. No doubt he was very much in love, and very proud of his wife; but his love was like a fine rain: one of those kinds of rain which one neither sees nor hears—unceasing, penetrating, chilling.

Mr. Haviland's personal attendant was a Frenchman named Groult. He came from Avranches, and had been many years in his service. They had

travelled twice around the world together and were inseparable.

Groult was not handsome. He had stiff, flaming-red hair, shifty green eyes, and walked with a limp; but he was of an exemplary cleanliness, and fulfilled his functions with perfect exactitude. He was married; his wife was also in Mr. Haviland's service. She remained in Paris and looked after the house he had built recently on the Boulevard Latour-Maubourg.

Mr. Haviland was much interested in chemistry, and Groult helped him in the laboratory. He had a mania for drenching himself with medicine daily, and Groult looked after his travelling pharmacy. Besides manipulating drugs with much ability, he was adroit in many ways, and was even a good locksmith when occasion required. His horrible bony hands, with their enormous thumbs, could execute the most delicate tasks; but though endowed with an extraordinary aptitude for mechanical arts, he could never learn to write in the least degree legibly. He had composed an alphabet for himself which he alone could understand, and it was impossible to make out a letter or a figure of his accounts, which he scribbled on scraps of paper. The cooks and housemaids detested him because of his scrawls, his horrible hands, his lameness, the spots the chemicals left on his skin, and the smell of

drugs with which he was impregnated; they nicknamed him "Clochon," and feared him like the devil; they considered him capable of any crime, but could find nothing to reproach him with. Groult was impeccable.

He inspired Hélène with an instinctive repugnance, and at first she tried to have him dismissed, but soon saw that he was indispensable to her husband, and resigned herself to the sight of him limping perpetually between her husband and herself. He did not appear to bear her any malice, and never comported himself towards her otherwise than as a perfect servant.

Madame's wish to be rid of him had not frightened him very much. He possessed the confidence of his master, who he knew would not separate from him lightly. There was a tie between Haviland and his servant Groult. For twenty years they had been searching together for Samuel Ewart.

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Haviland was still a child when he heard for the first time the story of the old cashier David Ewart, and of his death on the scaffold in 1794. The sublime obstinacy of this brave man, quietly awaiting his doom while keeping the books his masters had confided to him, appeared most praiseworthy to the heir of the house of Haviland, whose

sense of fitness and tenacity of purpose just fitted him to understand such practical devotion. He showed nothing of what he felt at the moment; but later on, when he had become master of his actions and his fortune, he began to search actively for some living descendant of the old cashier. He learnt that Andrew Ewart, great-grandson of David, was alive and settled as a merchant in Calcutta. Andrew had married an Anglo-Indian, and had gone into partnership with a Brahmin; their business was carried on under the name of Andrew Ewart, Liçaliçali & Company. Haviland, accompanied by Groult, took the steamer to Calcutta, with the intention of finding Andrew and saying to him: "Your great-grandfather died in the service of mine, like a perfect gentleman. Allow me to shake you by the hand. Can I be of use to you in any way?"

When he arrived in Calcutta in 1849, he learnt that the firm of Andrew Ewart, Liçaliçali & Company had been dissolved by the decease of Andrew, who had died of cholera in June 1848, leaving a widow and a four-year-old son named Samuel; but Haviland could find no further trace of them. Mrs. Andrew, having been left unprovided for, had quitted Calcutta with her little child. Having learnt that Liçaliçali had settled in the Isle of Bourbon he went there, and found the Brahmin

giving English lessons to the children of the governor of the colony. Liçaliçali told Haviland that Ewart's widow and son were living with her brother —a Mr. Johnson, a former officer in Her Majesty's service; beyond this he could hear nothing.

Every week an advertisement appeared in the *Times,* inviting Samuel Ewart (who at the time of Hélène's marriage must have been about twenty-seven years old) to present himself, or make known his place of residence to Martin Haviland, Esq., Paris; but Samuel Ewart gave no sign of life.

For twenty-five years Haviland pursued his researches, with no more apparent ardour or fatigue than when he entered on them. It was his task, and he took it up every morning as a carpenter takes up his plane. Groult held the threads of the affair in his hands, and disentangled them skilfully. He was particularly useful when it came to showing the door to some false Samuel Ewart; for many adventurers presented themselves to Haviland, as being the son and heir of the late Andrew.

Haviland's health became very bad in the autumn of the year 1871; he suffered from giddiness and insomnia. One day (it was at the beginning of the winter; they were living at Nice in the Villa des Oliviers) Hélène, who was reading a novel in the drawing-room, gave a cry of horror as her husband came in.

"Your eyes!" she said. "Look at your eyes in the glass!"

Haviland's blue eyes had turned black. His lips were trembling, and he seemed to be wandering in his mind as he murmured:

"Sam—Sam Ewart; he will come."

CHAPTER IV

HEY returned to Paris for the rest of the winter. The courtyard of the hotel was full of trunks, cases, and packages; their size and number filled Madame Groult with despair as she moved about among them. She wore a bed-jacket of flowered calico, and her body seemed as limp as the stuff which covered it. Madame Groult, flabby and agitated, resembled a bundle of rags moved by some invisible force.

Her face was perpetually bathed in a sort of steam, and she continually wiped it with her cottony forearm. She arranged the bonnet-boxes according to the directions of the lady's-maid; but naturally timid, the orders and counter-orders she received only made her lose her head, while the frizzy-haired maid, her cap-strings flung coquettishly back, made eyes at the grooms.

Hélène threw her travelling mantle on an arm-chair, and Mr. Haviland promptly took it up and folded it neatly. She turned impatiently to the window, and began to beat "The Turkish Patrol" on the glass. The dome of Les Invalides glimmered faintly under the foggy sky. All around

was dull and grey, and she went sulkily away to her own room.

Groult announced Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac. The business man had come in haste to salute his son-in-law and embrace his daughter. He was buttoned up to the throat. His cracked and broken top-hat was beyond being treated with an iron, so water had been tried. It had been literally soaked, to make the rebellious nap lie down and to give it a little shine. The heels of Monsieur Fellaire's boots were worn down to such an extent that he was forced to walk like a duck in order to maintain his equilibrium.

Haviland did not offer him his hand.

Fellaire tried every means to warm up "his dear islander"—"his most highly-respected son-in-law." His metallic voice sounded like the striking of flint and steel, but he could get no spark out of Haviland. He said to himself that, after all, this devil of a man was naturally taciturn, and persisted obstinately in his efforts to electrify him. Seeing that no inquiry was made as to the state of his affairs, he said at last:

"By-the-bye, I won't conceal from you the fact that I have been through some very rough times lately. I have been through what one might call a crisis."

He could not very well conceal difficulties of this

kind from Haviland, whom he had pursued with demands for money for the last four years. During the siege he had applied for a draft on a Paris banker by balloon, by carrier-pigeon, by advertisements in the *Daily Telegraph.* Haviland had satisfied the first demand, the others he had not even replied to.

So Fellaire presented himself at Mr. Charles Simpson's bank, Rue de la Victoire, and by using the beloved and respected name of his son-in-law, borrowed a considerable sum. This artifice seemed to Haviland intolerably unworthy.

Fellaire therefore did not attempt to hide his troubles, but he said he had surmounted them, and had now a magnificent affair in hand. He assumed an attitude suited to the importance of the subject, stuck his arms akimbo, and drew a long breath.

"It is a matter," he said, fixing a Napoleonic look on the ceiling, "the essentially beneficent aspect of which will not escape you. It is a question of opening a working-men's bank on an entirely new basis. At an epoch when the over-rapid advance of the labouring classes has become embarrassing to the political economist, and presents, if I may say so, a permanent menace to society, the need becomes self-apparent for some institution which will inspire the proletariat with the sentiment of thrift. Freed now from the obstacles which the preceding govern-

ment would certainly have put in the way of the foundation of an establishment of this nature, the moment has come in which to act——"

Just then a ray of sunlight—the only one in the salon, perhaps in the whole house—fell treacherously on Fellaire's wretched hat, and showed it up in all its misery. He paused for a moment, then continued energetically:

"And to act quickly."

He asked Haviland if he would like to hear the statutes of the proposed "working-men's bank."

Haviland answered, "No!"

Fellaire insisted that he should at least let him give a general idea of the way in which the bank was to be organised. He looked to his son-in-law for some valuable advice. And why not speak frankly? The business was worthy the attention of capitalists of the first rank, and he was anxious that Haviland should benefit by the advantages reserved for the original shareholders.

When he had finished speaking, Haviland rang the bell, the man-servant limped in.

"Groult," he said, "take away that cigar."

It was the stump of a much chewed penny cigar, which Fellaire on entering had deposited on the edge of the console table.

Haviland then looked Fellaire squarely in the face and said:

"I will not give you any advice, because you would not listen to it. I will not give you any money, because you would not pay me back. You are not a gentleman—no! I beg you never to enter my house again. You can see Madame Haviland when and where you please."

And he left the room.

Fellaire, though upset and staggered by this blow, feeling that everything had come to an end, yet had the courage to kiss his daughter gaily and keep up a few moments' chat about trifles. She received him with the tenderness of a child. In his easy-going nature there was something which corresponded with her laziness, and after all he was her father. With one glance of her woman's eye she had noted the ragged edges of his linen, the worn collar of his coat, the shabby hat—all the sordid details of his costume. She guessed the truth. But seeing her suspicious, he smiled—poor man, he spoke of the vast enterprises which were absorbing him. He accused himself of becoming negligent of his appearance as he grew older. He asked if she were happy, and told her to love her husband. Then, having embraced her effusively, he went downstairs with a heavy step—his back bent, his eyes dull, his chin dropped, his head hanging under his everlasting hat; he had aged by at least ten years.

Hélène saw that her husband and father had

disagreed, and, although she guessed the cause of the rupture, she took part against Haviland. From that moment husband and wife began to bicker and exchange bitter allusions; they would quarrel without any apparent motive, so that explanations were out of the question.

As she had sudden emotional outbursts, she transferred her wasted affections abruptly to her husband's nephew, George Haviland—a smart, good-looking, blonde boy, with a loving but sulky nature. He was born at Avranches, and had been brought up in the Catholic religion, in the midst of the little English colony there. He was an orphan, and his uncle, who was also his guardian, had placed him as a day-scholar at the Collège Stanislas. Hélène spoilt him with the best intentions in the world. She would arrange his hair herself twenty times a day, to see which fashion suited him best. She would make him leave his studies in the evening to accompany her to a concert or to the theatre.

But her days were empty, and she often wept from sheer ennui. She would have liked to live in a garret alone with her father, and would run off in secret to visit him. He was living, for the time being, rent free—"drying the plaster" on the fourth storey of a new house in the Rue de Rome. These expeditions, on which she went trembling, and with her veil down, as though to a rendezvous, amused

her immensely. Her father's rooms looked like a bachelor's lodgings; there were pipes among the papers on the table, the faded sofa was inviting and soft in spite of its broken springs. After she had kissed him on his big heavy cheeks, she would rummage in every corner. If she discovered some feminine object, such as a parasol or a veil, she would pass over it, and with tight lips but laughing eyes pretend not to notice it. Her father watched her, in mute admiration and love. When she had turned over the papers, eaten the cakes, had something to drink, laughed, and pulled his whiskers, she would heave a deep sigh and depart; and he, settling his disarranged smoking-cap, would go with her to the landing and whisper at parting, "Love your husband, my dear; love him with all your heart."

As a matter of fact, she detested her husband. Leaning back in the cab, she would imagine him sitting in front of her, back to back with the cabman, with his lifeless eyes, and his cheeks like underdone beef, and would make a little grimace expressive of disgust.

Was there in the bottom of her soul, in the region of bygone days, the image of a countenance, half effaced by time, but still loveable, dear, the face of one who has departed never to return? Among the longings of this wearied woman were there perhaps

some which groping out towards one being went a far far journey yet never reached their goal?

One day, when she had let a piece of embroidery, begun long since, fall to her knees as though it were too heavy a burden, she was noting with that fixed intentness associated with ennui the imperceptible irregularities of the glass in the window panes which, looked at sideways, seemed to waver into architectural outlines. Presently her maid brought her a visiting card from someone who had called and wished to see her.

She glanced at the card, sprang up, adjusted her curls, settled the pleats of her skirt, and went down to the drawing-room, transformed and animated, with a swan-like grace in the poise of her head, and a queenly sweep of her trailing robes.

CHAPTER V

ENÉ LONGUEMARE was standing before her. He was paler than formerly; his cheeks had filled out and his features softened, but his skin was sallow, and his eyes shone in a dark circle ploughed by fever contracted in the rice fields; he had still his old frank look, his wide affectionate smile, and his outspoken manner.

"You see," she said to him, "the world is small, and one comes back from the furthermost parts of it. I am not surprised to see you, but I am very, very pleased."

They were ill at ease at first. Each one had lived a long span of life, of the details of which the other knew nothing. They sought about for common ground. She was the first to risk a cordial phrase, perhaps because she felt it her duty as mistress of the house, perhaps because she was tempted by some secret sentiment.

"I have often thought of you," she said. Then René plunged boldly into their mutual recollections. He spoke of the cups of tea at the house in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, of their walks at Meudon, of her pink and white muslin frocks which

the brambles tore, of Monsieur Fellaire's fine waistcoats which they would make a rallying point on their excursions through the woods, as though it were the white plume of the Béarnais; and of all the nonsense they talked. She asked him if he still kept frogs in his pockets, and at the end of a quarter of an hour it seemed as though they had never been separated. When he began to tell her quietly of his travels, and of the monotonous fatigue of his service on an unhealthy station, she opened her beautiful humid eyes wide as she listened. Then she asked him what he intended to do. He was tired, he said, of military service. He should send in his resignation, and settle down as a country doctor and village bone-setter: if some very innocent young girl had a fancy for raising poultry under his protection, he would marry her.

"Ah!" she said quickly, "you want to get married?"

But she knew from his answers that he was not serious; he had some great void in his heart, some sorrow, perhaps some souvenir.

George came back from school and burst in upon them with his lesson-books, then settled himself like a spoiled child to enjoy the distraction that this gentleman offered him. Hélène did not send him away, but told him to keep quiet and do his work. The doctor was relating an episode of his

voyage, and the boy, noisily turning over the leaves of his dictionary, was biting his penholder and turning his head as he listened to a story of sea-spiders eaten alive by one of the sailors on the deck of the ship, when the maid came in to say that Mr. Haviland was ill, and begged Madame to go to him at once.

Mr. Haviland's bedroom was very large, and filled with strange objects, all arranged in precise order. There was a cabinet full of sealed and labelled bottles. He had collected half a bottle of water from all the rivers he had crossed, and one could read on the labels—Tagus, Jordan, Simois, Eurotas, Tiber, Ohio. Another cabinet contained specimens of the marbles of the world. There was also a cupboard dedicated to historical souvenirs, and containing stones from Tasso's prison, Shakespeare's birthplace, Joan of Arc's hut, the tomb of Héloïse, leaves from the weeping willow of Saint Helena, a piece of poetry written by Lacenaire in the Conciergerie, a travelling-clock stolen from the Tuileries in 1848, a comb which had belonged to Mademoiselle Rachel; and in a glass tube, a hair from the head of Joseph Smith the Mormon prophet, besides other relics too numerous to be specified. Several large tables, made of pine wood, such as architects use for drawing-tables, were covered with phials, and the whole place ex-

haled a very pronounced pharmaceutical odour.

Haviland was lying on a sofa near his iron bedstead, a travelling rug over his legs. He was livid, save for the red patches on his cheeks. His eyes, unnaturally sombre, seemed to be starting from their orbits. He took hold of his wife's hands with the eager tenderness of a person who feels that everything is slipping away from him. He told her that he loved her, and was grateful to her; that he felt very ill, but hoped to recover, as he was well taken care of, and followed a treatment of his own which Groult knew how to apply. Then an attack of giddiness cut short his speech.

By-and-by he went on:

"I ought to warn you, Hélène, that I have wandering moments. They are a feature of my disease. You must take no notice of anything I may do at such times. Fortunately my affairs are in order. My will is with my notary."

He then told her that he had left her the income accruing from his fortune for her life, but that the capital, as was only right, was to go to George Haviland. He had also made a disposition in favour of his servant Groult, and had told him about it. He pressed his wife's hand, and fixing on her the strange and dolorous look he sometimes wore, begged her to listen carefully to what he was about to say.

"Out of respect for my memory if I die, my dear Hélène, look for Samuel Ewart, and execute my last wishes in his favour. In the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who will come again to raise the dead, I conjure you to neglect nothing which may ensure that the last descendant of David Ewart shall receive the money I have bequeathed him. I know he is alive, for sometimes of nights I see him. I should recognise him were he to come, and he will come."

Suddenly the sick man fixed his eyes on a dark curtain which hung in heavy folds before a door, stretched out his trembling arm, and cried:

"There! there! before that door. There he is, there's Sam Ewart. You can see the mark he bears on his neck, under his sailor's shirt; it is a red mark because of his great-grandfather, old David—Sam! Sam! Oh my God!"

He fell back on the sofa breathing heavily. Hélène, who felt helpless and lost among the many medicine bottles, rang for Groult, who pushed her aside, rudely enough, and took possession of the invalid.

That night she could not sleep. As she lay watching the moonlight, she saw her husband, wrapped in a plaid, come down through his bedroom window, and walk straight to a well by the stables.

As she watched him breathlessly, her face pressed against the glass, she was conscious of a sharp pain at the roots of her hair, but could neither move nor cry out. Then she saw Groult come, half-dressed, from the outbuilding where he slept, and follow his master on tiptoe. She saw the latter peering down into the depths of the well. After some time he raised his head, and stretched his hand out as though to feel from which quarter the wind was blowing, after which he went back through the window to his room. She saw Groult shrug his shoulders and slouch off to his outbuilding, with a contemptuous gesture.

Madame Groult had appeared for a moment in her everlasting bed-jacket and an enormous frilled night-cap at the door of the lodge. When the door had closed upon them both Hélène thought she heard Groult ill-treating her.

Haviland had become a somnambulist.

The next day she found him up and dressed, peacefully and silently occupied in labelling numerous little stones which he had taken from famous monuments. He was writing on gummed paper the words "Coliseum," "Catacombs," "Tomb of Cecilia Metella." His eyes which had recovered their normal colour, a dull blue, were quite expressionless.

But she did not feel reassured. She wanted to

remain by him, and determined to sit by him herself and send for doctors, although he had strictly forbidden her to do so.

Groult came into the room with a bottle and a glass, from which he poured some syrup and handed it to his master, looking fixedly at Hélène the while. He watched her with a cynical familiarity, an audacious effrontery, that made her blush. A little while after drinking the syrup, Haviland was seized with giddiness and stupor. His pupils once more became extraordinarily dilated.

From this day, Hélène was tormented with a vague uneasiness. One evening, about five o'clock, she noticed the tracks of nailed shoes on the carpet of the room. The steps went in an oblique line right across the room from the outer door to that of the dressing-room. The tracks were extremely faint, and only visible because the rays of the sun were at that moment falling on the carpet, showing up the slight signs of pressure and the specks of white dust on the rich, soft Smyrna tissue. She was startled and called her maid, and they inspected the dressing-room minutely, but everything was in order. For some time she tried to explain to herself the meaning of these footsteps, but as she could find no solution to the problem, she tired of troubling herself, and fell back into her accustomed indifference.

When René Longuemare returned, Hélène, who was expecting him, had dressed her hair in the way in which she knew he liked it best. She could not hide her unhappiness from him, and weakly told him all the misery of her life, and how wretchedly her marriage had turned out. She knew that she loved him. She would have liked to be gathered to his broad, warm chest, to weep there, and forget everything. René remained very calm by the side of her. The more she confided in him, the more he felt that he must not abuse her confidence. He loved her respectfully; she represented the poetry of his bachelor's existence, where prose was not wanting. He had taken up his old habits in Paris, and every night he went to some little theatre, and to supper afterwards. There was a spacious and lofty place in his soul for an ideal creature, and in this place he had put Hélène. On her side, though tired and weak, abased in her own eyes by a loveless marriage, but reserved according to the habits of her class and circumspect from preference, she kept well under when in René's company whatever tendencies she might feel towards the too alluring or the too encouraging. So far exempt from all fault, it seemed to her quite impossible to contemplate committing one.

When she spoke to him of her husband's illness, René shook his head. It was probable that Mr.

Haviland was treating himself wrongly. According to the symptoms described to him, the army doctor's diagnosis was that it was not a case of a natural disease following its usual course; he was inclined to attribute it rather to the intermittent action of some injurious agent, some poison. The dilatation of the pupil seemed to him to be unquestionably due to an immoderate use of belladonna or atropine. To fight against his rheumatism, Haviland had evidently made use of chloro-hydrated sulphate of atropine, and now according to appearances was making a most disastrous abuse of this drug.

Hélène resolved to act on René's urgent advice to call in a doctor, also to nurse the sick man herself.

The following day she found him in an attic which he used as a workshop. He was planing a board with the greatest care, for he was a carpenter as well as a chemist. Seeing him so calm and rested, she thought she must have been dreaming. He talked about the cook, who was a thief, and whom he had sent away; it was Groult who had discovered his peculations. Every now and then he would lay his plane down on the bench and delicately remove a shaving caught in the guipure of his wife's dressing-gown. His eyes were clear and normal, and he had never shown such a lack of imagination.

She thought of René, so lively, so intelligent, his mind as full of interesting things as a well written book, his soul bursting with youth and strength; and her heart swelled with hate when she looked at the old man bent over his plane. Groult came at the usual time to bring his master his syrup. When he saw Hélène in the attic, where she had never before put her foot, he rolled his eyes at her like a furious cat.

Then, as on a previous occasion, while Haviland was drinking his syrup, he looked at her impudently, and growled something between his twisted lips. He was so ugly and so cynical that there and then in a flash she understood clearly and certainly without any question what it was he was doing.

She stretched out her hand, as though to snatch the glass from the old man's lips. Groult whispered in her ear, in an ill-mannered and menacing tone:

"Don't be childish."

She stood still, incapable of moving, white to the lips. Haviland finished the syrup and wiped his mouth.

The miserable woman rushed down the stairs, overcome, giddy, feeling as though at each step she would fall through the ground, frightened at her own immeasurable cowardice.

She did not dare to reappear before her husband: she heard that evening from her maid that he had

been violently delirious, but that then he was resting. She had imagined him to be dead, and heaved a sigh of relief. She said to herself, "He lives; there is still time to speak, to act. I will not be the accomplice of a . . ."

Her nerves had been stretched beyond endurance, and she sank down exhausted and heavy with sleep. She thought of René, and her imagination pictured him clothed with all the visionary charm and magic of an absent loved one; her thoughts grew confused and painful. Her head was burning, yet she shivered and her teeth chattered. She experienced a sensation akin to joy, as she slipped into bed; then she lost all grasp on reality. She saw terrible figures passing so quickly she had not time to recognise them. Where was she? And what did this crowd of strangers, dressed in all sorts of theatrical costumes, want with her? Something hot, which she kept pushing from her with horror, weighed on her chest and stifled her. It was a red cat whose eyes kept changing colour. She stuck out her elbows and bent her knees.

A nun came and straightened her bedclothes, but what was she doing there? There were two or three others, who prevented her from going out; yet she had something most important to do, something which could not be put off for one moment, though she was no longer sure what it was.

"Oh, my head! my poor head!" she cried. She was suffering so in her brain that she looked about for a wall, an iron wall, against which to strike her skull, and thus obtain relief. Oh! quick! If she could only make a good wide crack in it so as to let out the water which was boiling inside. An unfamiliar voice said, "Yes, more ice"; but she saw no ice. She was lost on a shore of burning sand, on the edge of a sea of molten lead. She called out, "René! René! take me to the woods at Meudon! Have you forgotten the time when you used to gather hawthorn there for me?"

She fell asleep. When she awoke she was quite childish, and recited in the monotonous tone of a schoolgirl bits of the Catechism and scraps of fables.

"I can't learn my lessons," she murmured. "Madame, my head aches; let me go home. I want to see Papa."

One day she found herself sitting up in bed, very weak but very hungry. She learnt from the nun who was nursing her that she had been very ill for three weeks, but was now out of danger. She made a great effort to collect her thoughts, and asked:

"And my husband?"

The nun told her not to worry; he was well. Hélène breathed again.

During her convalescence she had several lapses

of memory, and suffered from the great mental fatigue which ordinarily follows brain fever. There was only one clearly-defined feeling in her mind—terror at the thought of seeing her husband again. When she was told that Mr. Haviland, who was now convalescent himself, was coming to visit her in her room, she had a violent attack of palpitation of the heart. He looked at her affectionately, told her how much he loved her, and for the first time she saw a smile on his grave face. The smile came from within, so profound and so true that she could not but be moved and touched by it. She began to cry, and, turning to the old man, like a loving child put her arms round his neck; but he had already regained his usual stiffness.

By dint of great effort she recalled across the vapours of her mind the memory of the two potions she had seen Groult pour out. She took her husband's hands in her own and said to him supplicatingly:

"If you love me, if you wish to save us both from a horrible death, send away, I conjure you, your valet; send him away to-day, at once. What he has done is horrible—horrible. I cannot speak of it. Send him away; send him away."

Mr. Haviland remembered that Hélène had always shown an aversion for the valet, and, seeing her so feeble, shaken by convulsive sobs and

half fainting, he decided that though she was speaking unreasonably it was necessary for him to sacrifice his servant. He called him down from the laboratory and said to him:

"Groult, we must separate. I am quite satisfied with you, and I should have liked to keep you with me until my death—yes. But your presence in this house has become impossible, for reasons which I need not explain to you—no. I shall not change in any way the dispositions I have made in your favour. I tell you so, and you may believe me. You will leave the house on Friday. I will look after you until you get another place. I should like your wife to remain in my service, and I wish to continue in direct communication with you on all matters which concern Samuel Ewart. I have nothing more to say."

Groult did not answer; he simply bent his head and left the room.

CHAPTER VI

IT was on a Friday that Groult was given notice to leave. On Saturday Haviland felt better than he had done for several months. He drove in the Bois de Boulogne with Hélène, whose health was now almost re-established.

The slight shaking of the carriage and the fresh air agreeably fatigued the two convalescents. Hélène was in the indifferent state born of lassitude. She accepted for the nonce with all her deadened heart the insipid husband and the monotonous fate which had fallen to her lot. Weakness brings with it such consolations. From sheer sick egoism she grew affectionate to the man seated by her side in the barouche, his knees under the fur rug which warmed her own. She glanced coldly at the trees, the lamp-posts, the foot-passengers whom the carriage left behind, at the houses in the Champs Élysées, with their coachmakers' showrooms, at the sanded alleys, where bowlegged grooms were leading horses up and down by the bridle in the shade; then at the Arc de Triomphe dominating the open space around it with heavy emphasis; then, to the left, at the avenue leading to

the Bois, bordered on each side by a band of English gardens; she could see, to the right, horsemen galloping on the gravelled paths: all was bathed in the spring sunlight. The watering-pipes had already made their appearance, and men were dragging the long tubes on their little castors about the roads and sprinkling the legs of the half-frightened horses. Sometimes the wind and the shadow of a rapidly driven victoria passed over her face. A pale girl with red hair and painted lips, with her elbows well in as she held the reins, would drive quickly by, a groom with folded arms seated behind her. When the fresh air of the Bois was reached they drove more slowly; carriages gay with tiger skins, with bright spring toilets and happy faces followed one behind the other at a footpace. Salutations were exchanged between one carriage and another, smiling cavaliers bent down to talk to women lying back on the soft cushions beneath the shade of the lowered hoods. A workman's wedding-party went by on foot, in couples, in the opposite direction.

The stiffly-correct attitude of Haviland was not displeasing to Hélène; she liked his impassibility and his good style. The silence of the man, the calm expression of his face, the simplicity of his ideas pleased her now as so many delicate attentions bestowed on a convalescent. He was dearer to her

now she felt she had saved his life. She was afraid of thinking too deeply, and enjoyed the delights of a restricted fatigue and a daily increasing strength. She cossetted herself with the luxuriousness of a chilly cat.

They got out at the Cascade, and drank a glass of milk at the Café.

The tables on each side of them were occupied by whispering old men and the rustle of dresses intermingled with the faint murmur of chattering women. In front of her three young fellows were talking at the top of their voices. She did not know the two facing her, but the one whose back was turned to her and who was almost wholly hidden by one of the waiters she recognised by the outline of his shoulders.

She felt a painful inward spasm, and something in her throat seemed to stifle her, the blood rushed hotly to her cheeks, an indescribable anguish which was at the same time a rapture of overpowering delight took possession of her.

Longuemare, the cause of all this trouble, was far from thinking she was so near him, and went on with the conversation so noisily begun, exaggerating outrageously, as was his habit, his views on the subject under discussion.

"The only practitioner whom I admire," he said to his comrades (who seemed, like himself, to have

been lunching well), "the only one, is Pinel. He never gave any medicine to his patients for fear of checking the normal course of their disease. Satisfied if he could describe and classify a lesion, he prudently abstained from attempting to heal it. Before the magnificent progress of an open wound he remained attentive, respectful, motionless. What a doctor Pinel was!"

René's voice was drowned in a burst of laughter; interruptions spouted forth and the three friends all began to talk at once. Hélène's throat grew dry, there was a buzzing in her head, her sight failed her, and perspiration broke out on her brow. Her husband, seeing her so pale, asked if she was tired, if she wished to return home. She looked at him, and he appeared odious to her. His face was covered with a network of little violet veins, and his cheeks were white and scaly, his eyes were dim and vacant: she almost regretted his recovery now.

When they rose up to go, Longuemare saw her; the look which he exchanged with Hélène seemed to draw them closely together.

The next day the old man could not leave his bed; all the symptoms of his intermittent malady had returned, and in a few days they became alarming. On Friday morning Hélène sent for a doctor. Her husband's appearance was alarming;

his eyes were bloodshot and half out of their sockets; he was raving in delirium.

Dr. Hersent, who came while the attack was at its worst, gave him an antispasmodic and sedative medicine, which produced no visible effect. He declared that the case was very grave, that there was probably a profound lesion in the nerve centres, and, fearing that a serious termination might swiftly succeed his visit, insisted on holding a consultation that very evening. Just at this time Groult, having got his wife to attend to his packing, had taken a cab and was leaving the house in accordance with the orders he had received.

Hélène remained with the sick man. Crushed by a nameless terror, she dared not look at him; then, suddenly seized with horrible curiosity, she stared at him with all her eyes; she must see—see what was passing, even if it killed her. The unhappy Haviland was struggling with two men-servants, who by great efforts kept him between the bed-clothes. He was calling for his wife and for Samuel Ewart. Every note in his voice was altered; it sounded like the voice of another man and by so much the more appalling. He would whisper Hélène's name plaintively, and the next moment would break into shrill yells and sinister laughter. The contrast was so sudden it was impossible to understand how even a madman

could change so rapidly from sad tenderness to furious irony. Horrible enough as the scene was in reality, Hélène's sick imagination increased it tenfold. She felt as if red hot wires were running from her head to her heels; a burning garment wrapped her round behind and before.

She listened attentively to what her husband was saying, but was the more distressed that she could not discover the vaguest meaning in his wanderings. If at that moment he had pointed his finger at her, denounced her openly and cursed her, it would have been a positive relief.

At ten o'clock in the evening the doctors, Hersent, Guérard, and Baldec, were gathered round the patient, who, in their presence, was seized with a trembling in every limb; then he sank back and appeared to be sleeping. A new torment, the worst of all, began for Hélène. All the old feelings of friendship and respect for the man who had so loyally loved her returned. She could not help weeping, yet her tears disgusted her; they were hypocritical tears, for was she not to blame?

Haviland's breathing was so rapid and so painful that all who heard it, with the exception of the doctors, felt oppressed. His bony hands were spread on the counterpane and scratched and plucked clumsily at it. Dr. Hersent took his left wrist; the pulse was weaker, his extremities were

growing cold. His nose was pinched, his eyes sunk in. He rolled them round as though to see and recognize things for one last time, then he dropped his head back on the pillow and sighed three times. A gesture from the doctor announced that all was over; he was at rest.

When Hélène, who had been standing stiffly upright throughout his death agony, heard that he was dead, she felt a delicious sensation; it was as though the ground was opening beneath her and she was slipping away into nothingness. How sweet to cease from troubling, to cease *to be:* she fell fainting to the ground.

As the doctors, Guérard and Baldec, were leaving the house, they met a short gentleman, with big whiskers and tortoiseshell-mounted spectacles, in the hall. He took them by the hand and said with a solemn accent:

"Gentlemen, your efforts have been in vain; human skill, no matter how great it may be, has its limits. The princes of science cannot control Nature. I am one of those who respect courage even in defeat. I declare to you that Fellaire de Sisac will never forget the enlightened care you have lavished on his honourable and sympathetic son-in-law."

Then Monsieur Fellaire marched with a slow

grave step to the dining-room, where he ordered a light repast to be served to him.

Madame Groult, bathed in sweat and tears, was clucking mournfully in her lodge.

Dr. Hersent followed Hélène to her room, for he considered that her condition demanded some attention. When she saw this tall man all in black, whom she did not recognise, come in, she became delirious with fear. She stretched out her arms to him and shrieked:

"It was not I who did it! I swear to you it was not I!"

CHAPTER VII

ONSIEUR FELLAIRE showed immense activity after the death of his son-in-law. Attired in deep mourning he walked, with the nephew of the deceased, at the head of the funeral procession. The cortège went slowly down the outer boulevards to the Montparnasse Cemetery, where Haviland, who had adopted his wife's country, had bought a grave for himself and her. Fellaire's face was white and puffy from lack of sleep; he was not accustomed to rise so early in the morning. His reddened eyes and swollen eyelids behind his tortoiseshell spectacles gave an opportune expression of fatigue and melancholy to his face. Being stout, he naturally walked slowly and pompously. Aware of this advantage he made no effort to subdue or conceal his bulky importance. By a strange freak of fortune he was now able to wear a hat very different from that which he had deposited on the table in Haviland's drawing-room; the one he now carried was new and lustrous, with an immaculate lining. It lay on his arm like a gun on its carriage and appeared to be levelled at the hearse. His boots did not creak

as loudly as usual; they only emitted a sort of discreet sigh at each step as though the funeral genii were hidden in them. He stood motionless before the Gothic tomb, his eyes behind their spectacles turned to heaven with a spiritual expression, while the workmen let the coffin down, spitting on their hands as the cords ran through them, and murmuring their "Oh's" and "Eh's" under their breath. One understood by his attitude that his thoughts had passed beyond the bronze portals of the mausoleum and were floating on wings of sublime philosophy in ethereal regions. He was wandering thus in the domain of idealism, detached from earthly existence, when a little fit of coughing reminded him that he still lived and was tight in the chest. Behind him and towering above him by a head was a group of fair-haired, large-framed Englishmen, erect and stiff in their well-cut clothes. Two business men, *habitués* of the Brasserie de Colmar and constant companions of Fellaire's at billiards and dominoes, stood a little way off whispering together. The servants were huddled in the pathway to the side of the tomb, and the sun, shining strongly, showed up the footmen's whiskers and the black ribbons in the maids' caps, revealed sleeves that were too full and glimpses of black trousers so much too long as to fall in great folds over the boots.

When the service was over, Fellaire received the complimentary condolences of those who had assisted at it with the air of a brave but heart-broken man. He thanked those who had joined him in paying the last duties to the deceased. He seemed to recognise the presence of each person with particular satisfaction, although he did not know one among them. He shook their hands with an energy which was evidently meant to express, "Thank you—thank you. I will have courage; I will bear up." Only, when it was the turn of his old tavern companions, he barely accorded them the tips of his fingers, and frowningly repelled their expression of sympathy; he was afraid they would slap him on the shoulder and call him "Poor old chap."

He repeated his collective thanks many times, and finally addressed them to an assembly of persons who had been burying a magistrate, and who never understood what the singular gentleman in black wanted with them.

As it was impossible for him to distinguish between his son-in-law's friends and the rest of mankind, he would have gone on doing the honours of all the funerals throughout the day if they had happened to pass uninterruptedly before him.

From that time he never laid aside his mourning garments or his stoical and depressed mien.

Every day he went to the Hôtel Haviland to luncheon and dinner. After dinner he would put his hand on George's head, and say with a sort of sob:

"This boy interests me."

At the Brasserie de Colmar, where he played billiards in the evening, he would often exclaim:

"It is not only a son-in-law that I have lost; it is a son—and a gentleman."

. . . . . .

Julia, Madame Haviland's maid, must have heard the strange cry her mistress gave on the appearance of the doctor in her room; for the next day there were mysterious whisperings at the grocer's and the butcher's. The rumour that the Englishman of the Boulevard Latour-Maubourg had been poisoned, and that his wife was an accomplice of the crime, spread in a few days throughout the neighbourhood. Dr. Hersent, who lived in the Rue Saint-Dominic, was surprised upon the following Monday to hear his wife speak of the crime as a matter of general knowledge.

A long addiction to science and the practice of medicine had rendered Hersent careful in making researches, and he would not admit that there was, as a matter of fact, any reason to suspect Madame Haviland. He told his wife that it was against the etiquette of the profession to listen to such servants' gossip. At the same time, he was not

quite easy in his mind; the disease to which Haviland had succumbed had not been sufficiently characterised in the burial certificate which he and the consulting physicians had signed, and he felt some qualms of self-reproach on the score of his negligence in this respect. He hoped that the affair would have no further consequences, and confidently reckoned that there would be none.

CHAPTER VIII

ONGUEMARE, whose morning visit at the hospital had been protracted longer than usual on account of an epidemic of typhoid fever, did not arrive at the Montparnesse Cemetery until the funeral of Mr. Haviland was over. All that he saw of the ceremony was the sombre and energetic profile of Fellaire being conveyed home from the cemetery in a carriage drawn by two black horses, placed at his disposal for the occasion by the undertakers.

Retracing his steps at this sight, he passed between the sculptured urns and hour-glasses over the entrance gates, when he was accosted by a sprightly little man, who, with a great deal of gaiety, hailed him as a ghost, a spectre and a phantom, and hummed in a fine grave voice the opening lines from the air in "Robert the Devil"—"Nuns who repose."

It was an old class-mate of his, Bouteiller, who, celebrated at school for his ineptitude in science and letters, had become a reporter on an important daily newspaper. He had just heard, or approximately heard, three speeches pronounced over the

grave of a member of the Institute. Taking Longuemare by the arm, he said:

"My dear fellow, dine with me to-night at Bréval's."

During dinner Longuemare was profoundly agitated, but hid, as his habit was, his emotion under a joking exterior, and talked on many questions dealing with love and women in scientific language relieved by shocking puns; they drank champagne throughout the dinner. Bouteiller made a practice of doing so, and said this wine was a professional necessity for him. He was always extremely busy, and spent what should have been the best hours of his life on the railway. He inaugurated statues in every town in France, followed the President of the Republic into inundated departments, assisted at aristocratic weddings, listened to lectures on the phylloxera, saw and heard everything and remained the least curious of men. There was only one place in the world which interested him, and that was Chatou, where he had a cottage and a boat. He thought of nothing else, whereas he ought to have thought of the whole world. A factory could not burn down without him. Naturally, Longuemare was led to speak of Haviland and his singular habits, of his death, and in a casual way, of poisoning by belladonna. At the same time Bouteiller was describing his boat; they

understood each other perfectly. Towards ten o'clock the journalist said:

"My dear fellow, I must run round to the office. Wait for me at the Café de Suède; I have an appointment there."

At eleven they were both seated smoking at a zinc table, in the noise and light of the boulevard. Bouteiller was saying:

"You see you must have a rather short oar, which you can get a good grip on, and above all, thin at the end, so that it cuts the water like a knife"; when a young lad in a blouse and cap stopped in front of them and said:

"It is not to be to-night."

Bouteiller gave him a couple of francs and sent him off. He seemed displeased.

"A special report which I had written up in advance, and which is no good now."

Then by way of explanation he added:

"That young scamp knows how things are done at La Roquette. He has just told me that the man who committed the murder in the Rue du Château-des-Rentiers will not be executed to-night. By the way, you are a doctor; tell me if you think one suffers after having one's head cut off?"

"I can easily tell you that," said Longuemare, and he began a lengthy explanation.

"Life being a quantity, as Buffon says, it is sus-

ceptible to augmentation or diminution. The 'vital knot' Flourens talks of is rubbish. Now follow me carefully. If I say with Bichat that life is an assemblage of forces which resist death, I should add that these forces only resist for a longer or shorter period before final dissolution. Beheading produces a violent syncope, and abolishes sensibility in a measure which one may consider definite; but at the same time muscular life goes on. You must not confound——"

Here Bouteiller in despair broke in:

"No, no; I'd rather tell you at once that your explanation is too long, and I don't understand a word of it. Science has always seemed to me terribly obscure. There are certain subjects, like the immortality of the soul, for instance, or the existence of God, which are so difficult. Fortunately God does not come into the news of the day —by-the-bye, what was the name of the Englishman you buried this morning? I think I could make a good 'par.' out of what you told me, if I embroidered it a little. You were saying that . . . ?"

CHAPTER IX

ROULT having roughly ordered his wife to pack his bag, left Paris for Avranches, where he said he had business to attend to. As a matter of fact, he had inherited a bit of land in a neighbouring village. He put up at an inn in the suburbs, called the Red Horse. Here he was to be seen drinking in the company of farmers and graziers, pouring the entire contents of a small spirit decanter into his coffee-cup in true Norman fashion. He was more gay and outspoken than usual, talked willingly to the folks about him, accepted their courtesies, and treated them to drinks.

On Wednesday he took the train to Granville, where he arrived at nightfall, in most frightful weather. A bad squall, the sailors said. It was raining, and a high wind was blowing the light aslant in the gas-lamps, and howling in the narrow alleys. He went towards the old part of the town, and turned up a steep, narrow, and winding street full of the smell of fish. His left foot as it followed the right described the motion of a scythe in a wheat field, and his whole body swung at every

step; still he went quickly on in the darkness, grumbling and cursing as he splashed up the water in the puddles.

By-and-by he came to a small, mean grocer's shop, the blurred windows of which contained two or three bottles of sweets; he went in without hesitating. There was a wooden staircase in the shop, with a bed covered in scarlet cotton, packed under it. The sole entrance to the house was through the shop, and its unflagged earthen floor had crumbled in places and bore traces of heavily nailed boots. No one was about, and Groult, without losing time by waiting for the grocer, mounted the stairs and knocked at a door on the second storey, just where the banisters ended. A little old man, holding a candle close under his chin, examined the visitor through the half-opened door before admitting him into a room encumbered with packets of torn papers, dog-eared ledgers, and burst and yawning portfolios, from which protruded ends of ancient legal documents, all heaped up and pressed solidly together. Piles of dusty papers and parchments leant against the walls, behind which one could hear the mice scurrying, in spite of the noisy wind in the chimney and the beating of the rain on the roof.

A mean and disordered bed, hung with ragged curtains, exposed its wretchedness and bareness in

a shadowy corner. A thick layer of dust covered everything, making all objects uniformly grey; even the old man's face seemed to be spread with a coating of it. He was toothless, and his tongue moved and mumbled ceaselessly between his withered lips. His eyes were pale green, and their quick restlessness reminded one of the swift mice nibbling audibly behind the wainscoting.

"Well," said Groult, sitting down, "you wanted to speak to me; here I am. What's the news?"

The old man licked his gums slowly, and said in a drawling nasal voice:

"I am very pleased to see you, my good Monsieur Groult—perhaps there is some news, perhaps there isn't; it all depends upon how one looks at it."

He was twiddling his grey beard as he spoke, and seemed to be counting his words and the bristles in it at the same time.

Groult interrupted him with an impatient growl.

"Dear me!" said the other; "you are in a great hurry! As sure as my name is Tancrède Reuline, and yours is Desiré Groult, I am ready to tell you everything I know that may interest you. Daddy Reuline is known all along the coast from Carolles point to the Bréhal fisheries. Big and little all come to me. I do business with gentle and simple. No later than yesterday I collected a debt for Monsieur de Tancarville. Ah! my dear sir, it was

what you might call a bad debt. Monsieur de Tancarville said to me in these very words, 'Reuline, I was going to light my pipe with it.' And only last week the Baroness Dubosq Marienville——"

Groult interrupted by banging his fist down on the table, and Reuline, after a moment in which his lips moved without sound, went on in his slow nasal drawl:

"Now we will come, if you please, to your business. I am entirely at your disposition; we can't possibly misunderstand each other. I found for you the birth certificate of a certain Mr. Samuel Ewart, and sundry other papers, enabling one to identify this person. I gave you the papers from hand to hand, as it were, without so much as asking what use you were going to make of them. I just did it to be of service to you."

"What then?" asked Groult with a frown.

"Wait a bit—wait a bit," said the Norman. He moistened his lips and continued:

"It's none of my business to inquire what interest you had in Samuel Ewart's papers. I am very discreet, my good sir. Discretion is one of the leading virtues of my little trade. But suppose that Samuel Ewart is dead?"

"By God!" cried Groult, "if he is dead he won't come to life again"; and he burst out laughing.

"Wait a bit," said the old man (contemplating

the pins carefully stuck in the sleeve of his coat) —"wait a bit. Suppose some person possesses a certified copy of his death certificate—the death certificate of Samuel Ewart who died in Jersey without descendants, and that the possessor of this paper can produce it at the right moment."

Groult spread out his enormous hands. He was exasperated at what he considered the treachery of his old accomplice, which seemed to make the other papers he had procured for him, at a great expense, useless.

"No tricks," he said roughly; "act square."

The Norman's eyes blinked uneasily, but he answered in a calm voice:

"Whatever I said was for your own good; but I see it makes you angry, so let's say no more about it and part good friends."

He got up, and took a lipless pitcher containing a bunch of forget-me-nots from a dilapidated walnut secretary.

"See," he said, putting the pitcher on the table, "they will last all the summer. Each time I go along the shore by Carteret, I gather a bunch in the ditch which runs by Monsieur de Laigle's grounds. I wrap them up in my handkerchief. . . ." As he spoke, he passed his hand gently over the blue flowers and shook off the faded petals. "If one takes care to pull up the roots

with the stalks, the plant will live in water as it would in the ground. Dear me! I have neither wife nor child, dog nor cat, and one must be fond of something—I'm fond of flowers."

Groult was not listening to him, he was biting his lips and gnawing at his nails. Suddenly he jumped up and shouted:

"You've got Samuel Ewart's death certificate. Give it me. I want it, and I will have it."

Reuline, with a furtive glance at the walnut secretary, put the pot of flowers carefully back in its place.

"Wait a bit," he said—"wait a bit. I have got the paper, and I haven't got it. Perhaps I could lay my finger on it, and then again perhaps I couldn't; but let's talk as if I could. I heard lately that Mr. Haviland (in whose service you have been a good many years, haven't you?) was looking for this same Samuel Ewart. It is only natural that I should think of obliging him in his turn; he would be very glad to have news of Samuel Ewart, who died so unfortunately in Jersey."

Reuline paused and looked narrowly at Groult. He did not want to irritate him too much, but Groult answered quietly:

"If you want to send the certificate to my master

you must be quick about it. He is probably dead by now, or not far off."

The old man stuck his tongue in his cheek, and looked at Groult with such evident perspicacity in his green eyes that the latter felt uneasy.

"Poor Mr. Haviland! Well, well, such is life! But you seem very sure that your master will die! It seems, then, one can tell beforehand how certain maladies will end. Well, well, who would have thought it! Now, to return to our business, Mr. Haviland will leave heirs who will certainly be glad to know what has become of Samuel Ewart. There is only one thing I want, my good sir, and that is to oblige everybody, if I can."

Groult was quieter now. The wrinkles on his temples seemed to have gathered themselves into a sort of spiteful grin.

"But," he said, "Haviland's heirs won't give you a penny for the paper. You would be a fool to send it to them. What good would it do you? Give it to me; I shall be able to pay you something for it later on."

"Gently, gently. Suppose you explain your little business to me. Daddy Reuline is discretion itself. When I know what it is all about I will see what is to be done."

"I have nothing to explain to you."

"Oh, good Lord! I know what's the matter; you are shy. I must help you out. The late Samuel Ewart is put down for a round sum of money in Mr. Haviland's will. Provided as you are, thanks to me, with papers establishing the identity of the defunct legatee, you will find a young man willing, for a consideration, to present himself at the lawyer's office as Samuel Ewart, and receive as such the sum left to him. Good Lord! don't try to deny it. One must not leave good money idle, and as poor Samuel can't profit by it——"

"But, my dear Groult, who is going to answer for the probity of this spurious Samuel Ewart? Suppose he kept everything for himself? It would be an indelicate proceeding on his part, and very unpleasant for you. These things have to be considered. There is so much dishonesty in this weary world! Think it over, be wise. I only want what is for your good."

The old man stuck out the tip of his lizard's tongue and continued:

"I am warning you, and forewarned is forearmed. I know the person who possesses Samuel Ewart's death-certificate. This person is neither a Turk nor a Jew, wishes you no ill, and is most reasonable. And this is what I am authorised to say to you: Get hold of the legacy, and when

you have got it, offer a decent share of it to this person, through my intermediary; not half of it—no, that would be too much, it doesn't do to be too hard on folks—but something like a bonus of, well, fifty per cent. Otherwise this person, quite contrary to my advice, will insist on making the document public, and that would be awkward for you and painful to me."

During this long harangue Groult had quietly pushed his chair further and further back into the shadow; now, gathering himself together, he leapt suddenly on Reuline, and, seizing him by the throat, cried out:

"Give me the paper, you old Jew, or I will strangle you!"

He was furious at being thus met by an unforeseen obstacle.

Reuline, who was yellow, thin, and dried-up, and who drew each breath as though it must be his last, resisted with the strength and suppleness of a man used to such tussles—his frequent quarrels with the sailors who pawned their watches with him for money to get drunk on kept him in good condition.

Such unexpected resistance only made Groult more frantic, who saw red, and pulled out his knife; it was a wicked-looking thing, with a pointed blade fastened into a brass-mounted box-wood

handle, and was hardly ever out of Groult's hand; he was constantly using it for some purpose or another. The old man, in his struggles to get free, slipped and struck his forehead against the angle of the chimney-piece. Groult, still holding on, fell with him, and saw first a white scratch and then a stream of blood. Reuline's cries and the sight of the blood frightened him, and he lost his head. With singular lucidity he chose his spot and plunged the knife into the old man's breast. Then for a moment, which seemed to him endless, he paid no heed to anything. The man lay under him, resisting still with all his might, his mouth open, his green eyes rolling; then he let go and fell back, opening and shutting his hands convulsively as though trying to grasp something, then suddenly he was still.

His face showed no traces of violent emotion; he seemed to be smiling maliciously in his sleep.

With the end of his knife Groult prised open the lock of the secretary and began to rummage in it, tumbling the papers. The flame of the almost burnt-out candle flickered, and in the midst of the sudden silence the mice ran over the floor. He hunted through packets, portfolios, envelopes, flinging them down, as he finished with them, on to the corpse. Suddenly a bright light sprang up in the room; it was the paper round the candle end which

had caught fire. He hunted through old cardboard boxes, old blotting-pads, old leather cases, till at last he came on a stamped paper, which he thrust into his pocket with a sigh of relief. He blew out the candle, the wick of which was now floating in melted candle grease, and which, smoking and smelling, flared in his face and scorched his eyelashes before becoming extinct. He felt about for his cap, and, having found it, went out of the room. He hesitated a moment on the landing before climbing noiselessly up the ladder leading to the attic; here he peered anxiously through the skylight into the street. He could see, by the reflection of the light on the wet pavement, that the grocer's shop was not yet shut. Crouching behind some empty boxes, he waited a long time, his legs trembling, his throat dry, his head burning, starting and shivering at the slightest sound. Then, when at last the house and the street were asleep, he crept out, and found a cord with a hook at the end, which the grocer used for hauling bales of goods up into the attic; this he tied to a pulley above the window, and slipped down it with the agility of a monkey.

CHAPTER X

ÉLÈNE had only one idea now that she had passed the convalescent stage, and that was to take possession of René, to hold him to her, and never to leave him. He should be her refuge and her strength. She felt quite certain that her fears would leave her when they were together. She would marry him and would lead a peaceful, warmly-sheltered life between her husband and her father. All her innocent past was bound up in these two men; no bad dream could come gliding over the pillow which she would arrange with so much love.

She knew nothing of the rumours growing and spreading about her in the Quartier.

There were no difficulties made about Mr. Haviland's will; it was opened and read to the heirs by the notary. In it he left his wife, Hélène Haviland *née* Fellaire, all the income accruing from his estate; at her death it was to go to his nephew, George Haviland, or his heirs direct, should he have any.

To Groult was left an annuity of twelve hundred francs.

The testator expressly desired that the personal property of George Haviland, which, he being a minor, his uncle had managed for him, should be entrusted to the care of his old and honourable friend, Mr. Charles Simpson, banker, of Paris.

But Mr. Charles Simpson was suffering from a disease of the spinal cord, caused by a fall from his horse, and therefore could not accept the office his deceased friend had wished to confide to him. Monsieur Fellaire, hearing of this, at once proposed to fill Mr. Simpson's place.

He showed, on divers occasions, the liveliest solicitude for the minor's welfare.

One day after lunch, as he was enjoying his cognac and cigars, he said to his daughter:

"I am as interested in that boy as if he was my own son. In fact, I feel a fatherly affection for him. These sentiments are not under our own control."

Then having piled up a pyramid of sugar in his cup, he went on:

"I really don't know what I would not do for that boy."

He smiled a gentle, melancholy smile as he contemplated the sugar, as though it were the hope, so lovingly conceived, of being useful to George, which he saw melting before his eyes. Then he tossed

down the syrup formed by the collapsed pyramid and smiled anew.

Hélène looked at him uneasily; she guessed too well what he was about to propose. He drank a glass of cognac, and said:

"Poor Simpson, that was a most unlucky fall he had; it shows what weak creatures we all of us are! A month ago he was full of life and intelligence, and now he is almost idiotic. Perhaps I am exaggerating when I say intelligence; he never knew how to do business on a large scale; he was timid, never took any risks."

And Fellaire lighted his cigar with a pompous air; he knew how to take risks!

Hélène, feeling very uncomfortable, remained silent. Her father, sitting there impassively smoking, in his black clothes, correct and massive, looked in the tobacco smoke like a hero in the clouds—the very apotheosis of a financier.

"Simpson was very cold, very formal," he said; "I don't know if he would ever have taken a really paternal interest in our George."

Then, incapable of containing himself any longer, he went straight to the point. He dictated a letter to be addressed by Hélène to the family counsel, in which she proposed him as George Haviland's guardian.

Standing up, his head thrown back, his finger pointing commandingly at the page:

"Write, my child, write," he said:

"I feel assured that this choice would have had the approval of my husband."

She hesitated before putting down this colossal lie, but looking at her father, he appeared to her such a worthy figure, with such a tranquil forehead and so calm an air of conviction, that she docilely wrote what he told her.

Fellaire, floating in the serene regions of his imaginary paternity, glowed with good intentions.

He took the letter to the post himself. Hélène, left alone, shuddered with shame and fear—she had betrayed the dead man.

"If he were to come back!" she thought.

Suddenly she imagined she saw him with frightful distinctness standing before her. His face was absolutely devoid of all expression, so that it was impossible for her to penetrate the mystery of his thoughts. She knew the vision was imaginary, but she could not put it away from her.

. . . . . .

Fellaire did not sleep that night. His ideas were working tumultuously under the scarlet handkerchief which served him for a night-cap. He turned over and over, and each time he did so rattled the

water-bottle and glass standing on the mahogany table by the bedside, along with his pipe, his candlestick, and his spectacles. The silvery tinkle they made mingled harmoniously with his thoughts.

The magnificent but honest enterprises, which would mark his career as a trustee, filled him with anticipatory admiration. And that was not all. In his daughter he had a docile capitalist ready to his hand. He could embark on his great enterprise, the dream of his life; he could bring forth the child of his midnight watches, his great work: "The Fiduciary Society for Granting Loans to Wage-earners."

The Government would certainly authorise the establishment of a society built on a solid basis of capital. The list of the Board of Directors, who should be chosen from among titled and decorated men, would inspire confidence at once.

At this point in his imaginings, Fellaire saw the terrible ghost of the "Phœnix of the National Guard" flit across his bed-curtains. He felt a cold sweat burst out under the triple folds of his bandana, but he drove away the importunate memory and plunged again into the contemplation of the future. He thought of a most effective emblem for "The Fiduciary"—two hands, emerging from lace cuffs, and clasping one another. He could already see this symbolic device printed on the headings of

circulars and prospectuses, engrossed on tickets, bills of exchange, cheques, shares, stocks, and bank books, carved in stone, and of immense proportions, decorating the front of the building occupied by "The Fiduciary's" offices, which should be somewhere in the neighbourhood of the new opera-house—for the society would certainly buy a plot of ground and erect a building in a central situation.

The first ray of dawn filtered in through the blinds, and by its light Fellaire could see on his table a pile of unpaid bills from bootmakers and restaurant-keepers.

CHAPTER XI

HE day after the dinner at Bréval's, Longuemare, while lunching at a café, was looking over the newspapers. His eye fell on a column of general information signed "Spectator," a pseudonym he knew Bouteiller used; he frowned as he read the following paragraph:

"Another well known and original figure has disappeared from our midst. Mr. Martin Haviland, whose funeral took place yesterday, has left an odd collection of curiosities in his magnificent hôtel on the Boulevard Latour-Maubourg—some thousands of bottles containing water from all the rivers, streams, brooks, water-courses, fountains, and cascades in the world. Mr. Haviland was as remarkable for his charity as for his collections. His death, which will be much felt by the poor in the Quartier des Invalides, seems to be due to an abuse of belladonna, a drug he took to relieve the acute rheumatism from which he suffered. Such, at least, appears to be the opinion of the medical authorities. We are happy, by the exactness of our information, to be able to reduce this event, so painful in itself, to its rigid proportions."

The last lines of the paragraph threw René into a violent rage. He swore he would mark Bouteiller's face with his riding-whip. "Only I don't even know where the ape lives," he cried impatiently.

He went off to look for him at the offices of what was then the fashionable newspaper, and met him in the vestibule, between the bronze duck and the pink marble pigeon which sat, one on the letter-box and one on the receptacle for manuscripts. The fat reporter was just innocently opening his umbrella (it was raining), and his unconscious air of stupid good-nature disarmed Longuemare. He thought of the days when Bouteiller used to steal his Latin verses from his desk to copy at his leisure, and his heart softened. Bouteiller smiled with delight at sight of him, and cried out:

"Dine with me to-night at Bréval's, old chap; I count on you. Just off to the inauguration of the Grand Rabbi."

Longuemare stopped the way, and, thrusting the crumpled newspaper in his face, asked:

"What is the meaning of the last phrase of your paragraph? Who, to your knowledge, gave undue importance to this affair? Who has been suspected? and of what? Answer me."

Bouteiller stared roundly first at Longuemare, then at the paper, and answered with evident candour:

"I will tell you, my dear fellow. I put that in just to make the par. interesting, that was all; and you see I have kept well within bounds. It is poignant, and yet does not compromise any one. I know what's what. It's understood, then, we meet to-night at Bréval's."

Longuemare turned from him with a shrug of the shoulders. He was shaken by conflicting emotions; his nerves were in a state of intense irritation. He passed from one mood to another—now violent, now sentimental, and felt in the mood for indiscretions. Undoubtedly he was in love with Hélène, and this was beginning to trouble him profoundly.

In the over-excitement imposed on all his faculties by this sentiment, he felt capable of anything. In one week he wrote an article for the *Medical Gazette,* composed his first sonnet, attached himself to a young person who sold flowers in a students' dancing-hall, and spent a quarter's pay on her in eight days. Then suddenly the sonnet, the article, and the flower-seller became equally insipid and uninteresting. He dragged through another dreary week; then one fine day decided that he could now with decency present himself at the hôtel on the Boulevard Latour-Maubourg and offer his condolences to the widow.

It seemed as though a century had passed since

his last visit; and when he saw the big entrance-gates, the flight of steps in the courtyard leading to the hall door, the hall itself with its great earthenware stove, he felt as old as if he had lived through several lifetimes.

He waited for some minutes in the drawing-room before Hélène appeared. She seemed to him to be taller and paler in her black garments, as if he now saw her for the first time, yet she had not really changed much. During her convalescence, despite her mental tortures, she had become stouter and her cheeks less hollow; yet when he looked at her he felt a delicious sensation of novelty. Her eyes, under the fair hair which curled on her forehead, smiled in a vague and charming manner. She was the first to speak, and the trivial remark she made thrilled through him; he answered inconsequently. She, more mistress of herself, was secretly pleased at his evident emotion. He alluded slightly to her recent mourning, and then by an easy transition began to speak of the future.

What were his plans? she asked. He was going to leave the service, he said, and buy a practice; his father would advance him the money. She approved of this, and suggested the Quartier Saint James, or the Parc de Neuilly, where she had several friends to whom she could introduce him. She promised to consult him herself, and to further

his interests wherever possible. For herself, she did not know yet what she should do—she no longer cared for society; she intended to lead a retired life. Then from a feeling of delicacy, she added that probably she would not be so well off as people imagined; she had only the income from Mr. Haviland's estate, and there were many legacies to be paid out of it.

"If I become quite poor you won't turn your back on me?" she asked. Which question he had the good taste not to answer.

They did not say a word of love, but every look which passed between them was eloquent. They breathed heavily, and had the sensation of swimming in a fluid at once suffocating and delicious. She said she was too hot.

He took her hand in his and held it lightly; she did not attempt to withdraw it. They were unconscious of what they did or said, only they would have gladly died in that supreme moment. Hélène was the first to break the spell. She took her hand from his, a shadow passed across her face, and after a moment she said with a sigh:

"I have done many things which I would not do again, but I am really better than I have appeared to be so far."

These words stirred the sleeping waters of memory, and René turned his head away to hide

the tears that filled his eyes. It was she now who took his hand. But at that moment a step sounded in the hall.

"My dear—my dear," she said; and leaving the phrase unfinished, moved away from him to an arm-chair, into which she sank.

Fellaire, his entrance announced by the creaking of his boots, came in. He shook René's hand with effusion, and began to talk of the old times in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs.

"We brought you up, in a way," he said to the doctor. "We found you—you are our child. Well, well! you met some curious characters at my house in those days. It was a good school of observation for you. And since then you have travelled and seen many lands, like La Fontaine's pigeon. Ah, the sea! the sea!" He spoke of the poetry and the immensity of the ocean, and became quite emotional, until suddenly recollecting his letters, he asked permission to open them.

He sat down at a table, spreading himself, his papers and journals, so as to take up the most room possible, and went through his correspondence, hissing and growling over it contemptuously or impatiently, affecting to treat it at one moment with light disdain, and the next with intensely concentrated attention.

Hélène and René looked at each other in silence;

they felt as if they two only existed in the world.

Finally Fellaire, after noisily signing his name to various documents, flung down his pen, and ringing the bell as though in his own house, gave instructions for his letters to be posted, and sighed contentedly. His humour had changed; he was good-natured, easy, a little inclined to tease. He suggested that they should go and dine somewhere in the country —no one need know of it; it would not be exactly a pleasure trip. They must dine somewhere, why not have a snack at Meudon?

They all three enjoyed such impromptu excursions.

They found a restaurant at Meudon, with an arbour overlooking the river.

When Hélène untied her hat-strings, she raised her arms with a graceful movement that reminded one of the handles of an amphora. René was filled with admiration. Her fair curls clustered on her brow, her eyes shone softly beneath them. They exchanged a glance so profound and so limpid, it gave them the sensation of being merged in one another.

Fellaire, with heavy sighs, talked of the importance of business, and in return for a demand for ink and paper, was given a little muddy fluid in the bottom of a bottle, a rusty pen, and a sheet of blue

foolscap, which he covered with figures before cramming it into his pocket.

Then he brusquely demanded if his young friend knew any shipowners at Toulon. He rolled out the word "shipowners" with so much pomposity that it seemed as though he had only asked the question with the intention of producing a telling effect, which was most probably the case.

At dinner he squeezed half a lemon over his fried fish with all the grace his fat, short, ring-laden fingers were capable of.

He contemplated the young couple benignly through his tortoiseshell spectacles, not without a secret desire to exhort them and bless them, as in a melodrama.

Before them, on the river, a landing-stage lay along the bank; a long narrow island, edged by a curtain of poplars, cut the horizon line; boats were passing up and down; women in light summer gowns moved among the trees, and called in silvery tones to the occupants of outriggers. The water blazed with the reflection of the setting sun; then the light faded from sky and earth, a fresh breeze sprang up in the sombre verdure, and René put a black shawl over Hélène's shoulders. Fellaire, who had been telling stories and detailing the ingredients of dishes, unexpectedly began to admire the land-

scape, and to praise Providence for all its ways. Longuemare answered that Nature presents a scene of eternal carnage, in which everything lives by slaughtering something weaker than itself.

"Now, now, you are exaggerating," said Fellaire.

The shadows were closing round them; but they were all three very happy, and two at least would have stayed on contentedly, had not the business man suddenly remembered the Café de Colmar; it was time to play his game of billiards and to meet his friends, the brokers and advertising agents.

"Children," he said, knitting his thick eyebrows while consulting his watch, "time is flying, and I have an important engagement. Besides, it is going to rain." The wind was rising, driving the clouds furiously across the sky, while a full red moon seemed to be scudding in the opposite direction. They went towards the narrow lane which leads from lower Meudon to the station on the heights. Hélène took René's arm. She walked hesitatingly in the uncertain light, and they were silent; all at once she began to shiver.

"I am frightened," she said.

A tall thin man, with feet disproportionately long, and dressed in rags, started up in front of them. He pulled off a tattered straw hat, and showed a pale lean face, with two dull hollow eyes. He

muttered some sort of a prayer for charity, as he held out his hand.

Hélène pressed closely against René and drew him away.

"Did you see?" she said. "He looked like—oh, I am frightened!"

René himself could not suppress a feeling of uneasiness. The beggar, as a matter of fact, did look like Mr. Haviland; and what made it more painful was that his appearance was so mournful and so dilapidated, he wore such an expression of irremediable suffering, that he suggested the frightful vision of Haviland—not as he used to look, but as he must look then, at that moment.

They climbed on, up the steep path bordered with hedges and walls, the pebbles slipped and rolled under their feet. Hélène stopped to look fixedly at something in the shadow. René could see nothing in front of her but a bed of nettles growing beside a milestone. But the widow saw more than these; she flung up her hands with a loud cry and fell backwards.

Fellaire tried to prop her against the stone. René, who was bending over her, told him to let her lie full length.

She was stiff and motionless. Only her lips moved, and a little froth gathered at their corners; her eyes stared blankly at the sky.

By-and-by, when she recovered consciousness, she did not seem to think of anything beyond her extreme fatigue. On reaching home, she begged her father to stay the night. She was frightened, she repeated. She gave René her hand—it was limp, lifeless, and icily cold; and she looked at him with an expression of utter hopelessness and discouragement.

CHAPTER XII

OOR terrified Hélène never ceased trembling. The visitors who came to see her, the friends whom she expected, and who for some reason did not come—noise, silence, her own apartments, the street itself, everything frightened her. She started at every encounter. Her old school friend Cécile, who had married years before into the money market, came with much ceremony. Between her airs and graces and babble, she showed a lurking curiosity which was torture to Hélène. The paragraph signed "Spectator" had piqued Cécile's curiosity, but she almost had to go away without satisfying it.

She was standing up, saying her farewell, when she thought better of it, and reseated herself.

"These journalists," she said; "they really have no common sense. What was it one of them said about the frightful misfortune which had befallen you, my poor dear? and its just proportions—proportions? I don't know what one means by proportions!"

Hélène answered in a scared voice:

"I don't understand you; I assure you that I am——"

She stopped before committing an irreparable blunder. She was just about to affirm her innocence.

She sent for the number of the journal, and could not sleep after reading it.

In the meantime, a criminal affair had come before the magistrates at Avaranches, who were examining into it carefully. A certain Reuline, a pettifogging business agent of somewhat bad reputation, had been found murdered in his lodgings, Rue de Gesvre, Granville. Suspicion first fell on a drunken, debauched longshoreman, who had been to see Reuline about five o'clock the evening before the discovery of the crime. The grocer occupying the ground-floor of the house had seen this man coming down from Reuline's room, evidently in a state of violent excitement. But after a long and careful cross-examination, he was discharged.

Forced to turn his attentions to another quarter, the magistrate went over the scene of the crime again. He noticed that the packets of papers which had evidently been taken out of the secretary, turned over rapidly and flung down on the body of the victim, formed several distinct groups—each one was wrapped in a paper envelope, with a name and address written on it. This mass of papers had been prudently left as it was when discovered.

The body of the murdered man was drawn from under it with every precaution. One envelope was empty. From its position on the top of the pile, it must have been among those last examined by the assassin. On it was written, "Monsieur Groult, care of Monsieur Haviland, Paris."

The name of Groult was found, not at Granville, but at Avranches, on the register of the Red Horse Inn. Groult was still there, when a warrant was issued against him, and he was arrested.

Hélène, after passing an atrocious night, learnt this piece of news from the papers.

She had seen her husband again; the frightful apparition had reappeared before her. It neither reproached her nor showed signs of hatred or anger; it merely stood looking at her in the grisly form in which her imagination clothed it. How could she continue to live if it came to her thus every night?

When her father arrived at lunch-time, she flung herself on him in a delirium of affection and fear; she lifted supplicating eyes to him; she held him so tightly that he said:

"Why, what is the matter? You are hurting me."

Then he added that though he had always mistrusted Groult, this was a most unexpected revelation. The wretched man's crime made him shiver;

but in the night, he added, he had had an inspiration. He would find Samuel Ewart himself: he had that very morning written to the French Ambassador to England on the subject. He would follow up the search. And as he said it, his eye took on a sharp, keen look which seemed to pierce the ceiling.

It distressed Hélène to see him attaching himself to the dead man's interests.

"Father," she said, "wouldn't you like to go away with your daughter—far, far away?"

"Where?" said he, with busy good-nature. The idea of leaving the Café Colmar seemed to him absurd and monstrous. Recovering his surprise, he kissed Hélène on the brow.

"Baby," he murmured.

Then with his easy and indiscreet kindness, he brought forward a reason which would, he thought, keep the young widow in Paris.

"Our friend Longuemare would be disconsolate if you went away."

She replied gravely that Monsieur Longuemare must only think of marrying some innocent young girl. Then, with clasped hands and in a voice which seemed to come from the very depths of her soul:

"My God, my God! what a pitiless thing life is!"

He took her hands in his, and said in his unctuous, comfortable voice:

"What are you saying? what are you saying, my child?"

Laying his leather portfolio on the table, he lighted a big cigar, wreathed in the smoke of which he proceeded to draw up a memorandum about Samuel Ewart.

From that day Hélène's terror and remorse continually increased, from no external reason, but merely by the workings of her sick brain. The visions became more frequent and more precise. It was difficult for her to distinguish them from reality.

As a result of Groult's cross-examination the magistrate ordered his domicile to be searched. A police commissioner, accompanied by a locksmith, appeared at the hôtel one morning. Madame Haviland was told that he had seized certain papers found in the lodge, and that he asked the favour of a few minutes' interview with the mistress of the house in the course of the next hour or two.

This request fell on Hélène like a blow from a mallet. She distinctly saw her husband in his room, decomposed, but correct, calm, and well satisfied. She saw him seated, turning over the

pages of a review tranquilly, as a man who has just returned to his home.

Although his eyes had almost entirely disappeared and were mixed with clay and earth, he noticed a scrap of thread on the table-cloth, and removed it delicately, with the gesture so familiar in his lifetime. Then he vanished.

Hélène was now the prey of new fears. In her ignorance of things she imagined that justice, bent on dragging the confession of her most secret thoughts from her, would hound her on to the same scaffold as the servant Groult. She remembered everything she had read about the execution of Marie-Antoinette; she could feel the cold steel of the executioner's scissors on her neck. The madness of fear took complete possession of her. The rustling of her own dressing-gown made her half faint from fright.

Towards ten o'clock she heard a door bang. She flung open a window, whether with the idea of suicide or escape she did not know. It was only her nephew George returned at his usual time from school. He threw his books impatiently on the table, and, happening to look at his aunt, said:

"How big your eyes are to-day!"

He then began while waiting for breakfast to turn over his books, grumbling and pouting because

he had some Greek to prepare. Sitting on the edge of his chair, one leg tucked under him, his chin resting on the table, he turned over the leaves of his dictionary.

He really translated well, in spite of his grimaces, but he wrote carelessly, blotting his paper, and licking up the ink with his tongue.

She listened stupidly to the noises from outside, and trembled each time the boy kicked his foot against the bars of his chair. He was imitating the grave, affected voice of his professor.

"You will notice, gentlemen, the harmony of Sophocles' verses. We don't know how to pronounce them; we pronounce them all wrong, but still what harmony! Monsieur Labrunière, you will conjugate the verb δίδωμι ten times. Yes, what harmony!"

Then in his own squeaky voice:

"Auntie, I swear to you that my professor wears paper collars. We call him Python; do you know why? One day he said: 'Gentlemen, Python was a monster of repulsive ugliness and malignant spitefulness'; and Labrunière whispered, 'Just like you.' Labrunière is awfully funny. Do you know, Auntie, you are really a very pretty woman." At last he fixed his wandering mind on the Greek text, which he went over, word by word, like a magpie, filling

the room with his high-pitched tones, calling out the lines as he wrote them down, and stopping every now and then to count his marbles.

"Κάρα θεῖον, the divine head, Ἰοκάστης of Jocasta, τέθνηκε is dead. (How stupid this is!) She went—πρὸς τὰ νυμφικὰ λέχη, towards the nuptial couch, which means the bedroom. You notice, gentlemen, what a happy expression! how harmonious! κόμην σπῶσ', tearing her hair; καλει, she calls; Λάιον, Laïus; νεκρόν, dead. You see, Auntie, in French a *laïus* means a sermon, but in Greek it means an old fellow whom Jocasta had married, and the marriage had not turned out happily. *Tearing her hair she calls the dead Laïus.*"

From these scraps of Greek and French Hélène could make out an antique and noble story of a woman's despair.

George hurried on, eager to get to the end.

"Κρεμαστὴν τὴν γυναῖκ' ἐσείδομεν, we saw the woman hanged." He signed his initials at the bottom of the paper, stuck out his tongue, all violet with ink, and chanted, "Hanged! hanged! I've finished."

Hélène rose and went to her room. She was so calm, so precise, so certain of what she had to do; she seemed like a statue of Necessity.

Wrapped in her black shawl and her widow's veil, she went down the servants' staircase.

CHAPTER XIII

HEN she reached the street she staggered, dazzled by the brilliant morning sunshine, in which every object showed with extreme clearness. The carriages, the trees, the kiosks of the news-vendors, the most distant passers-by were all so distinctly outlined despite their smallness that they appeared close at hand. The light was painful to her; she saw everything with unconscious eyes. The most insignificant things, such as the numbers on the cabs and the names over the shops, engraved themselves on her vision in such minute detail as to be fatiguing to her worn nerves; they seemed to strike at her and wound her. She would have gone back, but she could not stop; all power of reflection had left her. A living woman had never before been so empty of thought. An idea had come to her, so simple, clear, and definite, it excluded all others. She walked on not even aware that she was walking, feeling as if she were flying and yet very weak, possessed only by this idea, incapable of a voluntary effort.

A little girl trotted in front of her carrying a baby and a bottle of milk. She watched the white

drops as they fell one by one on the pavement; all the mental faculty that remained to her fixed itself on the spilt milk. Each drop that splashed over gave her a feeling as of physical pain.

When she reached the quays the freshness of the wide, open space, the effect of the light on the water, and the cool breeze from the river, drew a sigh from her.

She hesitated a moment, then, turning to the right, went on. The Quai d'Orsay was perfumed with the scent of flowers in the neighbouring gardens. A stream of omnibuses, cabs, business men, and agile work-girls pouring from the Rue du Bac to the Pont Royal stopped her for a few seconds. She crossed the bridge without looking at the water, and, turning again to the right, went down the steps to the shore, where, by a group of willow-trees, the floating baths were moored. She passed over the plank and on to the boat, which smelt of hot water and tar.

She waited quietly, biting the top of her parasol, while the white-aproned attendant prepared her bath; and went quietly into the cabin, saying she would ring when she wanted her bath-robe.

As soon as the little door closed behind her she drew back the calico curtains with an impatient gesture, and, opening the window, leant out, breathing deeply. The Seine flowed beneath with

little shining ripples. From the washerwomen's boat moored on the opposite bank came the muffled sound of their wooden beaters. A buzz of voices rose above the men's enclosure at the side.

She looked on the bright scene with an indifferent, almost happy eye. With her black cashmere shawl drawn tightly round her shoulders, her widow's veil flung back over her bonnet and floating like a funereal cloud about her head, she was more beautiful than she had ever been. Her whole being seemed to exhale a voluptuous calm.

The screw of a steamer splashed as it drew near. The floating bridge of the bathing establishment oscillated slightly, and a steamer going to Point du Jour passed so close to her she could hear the voices of the passengers. Two vulgar-looking young men leaning over the side eyed her boldly, thinking, no doubt, of the toilet she was going to lay aside.

She noticed them, and she heard the elder of the two, who was fair and had red patches on his cheeks say:

"What a pretty woman! One wouldn't mind ——" But the boat had passed; the funnels were already being lowered under the arches of the Pont Royal.

Was it disdain or satisfaction that raised the corners of her mouth in a slight smile? She was

calm; her eyes wandered quietly from one point to another without betraying the slightest uneasiness. She raised her pretty arms with a graceful gesture which would have fascinated more than one man, and passed her hand across her brow; then she closed the window, evidently indifferent to all she saw from it.

It was noon-day.

Two o'clock came, and she had not rung. At ten minutes past two the attendant, surprised at not having been called, opened the door of the cabin and asked if Madame needed anything.

There was no one in the bath, but opposite it, between the window and the looking-glass, a tall, dark figure hung.

The girl fled shrieking for help.

Hélène Haviland had hanged herself with one of her nephew's neckties to a clothes'-hook. She was wearing round her shoulders the shawl which René had wrapped her in a month before in the arbour at Meudon. Her knees were stiff, and the tips of her boots touched the floor. The body was leaning to the left against a chair, which had no doubt been placed there on purpose. The face was covered with her widow's veil. When this was raised, the face showed congested; the tongue, black and swollen, protruding from the mouth.

When the police commissioner appeared on the scene he remarked:

"Well, I have seen many women who have commited suicide; but this is the first I have seen who has hanged herself."

CHAPTER XIV

ONGUEMARE was profoundly grieved at the hideous and ill-omened end of the woman he loved, though at first he did not appear overcome by it. He worked furiously at his profession; but he grew sombre, hard, and brutal. He showed none of his good qualities, save his zeal and intelligence as a surgeon. Quarrelsome with his companions, cynical with women, he wore out the most patient of his friends, and they left him alone. His irritability reached such a pitch he could not take a meal in his *crèmerie* without disputing with the waiters, the landlord, or the young lady behind the counter.

A somewhat brusque observation from the head physician at the hospital caused him to send in his resignation, and one fine day he arrived unexpectedly at his father's house, in the depths of the Ardennes, without books, clothes, or linen, a three weeks'-old beard and a sulky air.

The land surveyor was a little, dried-up, old man, who pruned his trees, bottled his wine, cemented the dilapidated tiles in the flooring of the rooms, chopped his firewood, and came and went, always

busy and always interested in the smallest details of life. He shrugged his shoulders when he saw his son lying all the day long in the garden, an empty pipe in his mouth, and a tattered straw-hat on his head.

One day after dinner he confided to René that he had "a lump on his arm"; it did not hurt him, but seemed to increase in size. "What must he do for it?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied René, turning his back on the indignant old man.

With his pruning-knife or scissors in hand, he would often pause, as though by chance, near the heap of hay on which his son sprawled for hours at a time.

"If you are ill, why don't you go to bed?" he would say; or, "If any one comes, I beg you in your own interests to change your clothes."

René acquired a habit of going out after each meal. A little river ran by the garden, and he would lie down among the rushes which grew on its banks. He did not indulge in day-dreams. Everything appeared to him to be painful, absurd, and hard; his grief had no charm, no beauty. He remained in this state for several weeks.

One day, as he was yawning stupidly at the water's edge, he saw some naked children, gliding with clumsy but pretty movements from one stone

to another, in the bed of the river. These little creatures, with their yellow hair, and rosy, laughing faces, calling, screaming, tumbling over one another, splashing about in the water, gave a joyous note to the dreary landscape. Longuemare called out to them on a sudden impulse, but they scuttled off, clinging on to the mossy stones by their hands and knees, diving to the muddy bottom, and not making much progress. One of them crawled into the crevice of an overhanging rock, where he thought he was safely hidden; but René caught him, and plucked him out of his hole like an eel. He could not have looked very cross, for the child was not frightened.

"Listen to me, you little savage," said the surgeon. "If you will bring me some frogs, I will give you a bright new penny. You know how to catch frogs? I live over there at old Longuemare's house."

When he got the frogs he stayed in his room, which soon began to smell strongly of chemicals and tobacco. Daddy Longuemare would look up from weeding his borders, to the little window, outside which hung bunches of mutilated frogs strung on wires. He felt a sort of religious respect for his son, now that he was working. He took up as small a space as possible in the house, and moved about on the tips of his toes. He forbade

the servant to go into René's room while he was at work there, even to make the bed.

One day at the table, as he was peeling a pear, he asked his son:

"Couldn't I help you prepare your frogs? Wouldn't you like me to cut you some little boards, for instance? I could paint them, and gum a layer of fine sand on them for you."

"Gum fine sand on little boards? What on earth for?"

The father explained that he thought his son was making artistic groups of stuffed frogs.

"I have seen them most cleverly arranged," he said, "in the naturalists' shops in Paris, some of them had wooden swords, and were supposed to be fighting duels; some of them were playing piquet with miniature packs of cards, and some were sitting in an arbour, drinking out of doll's glasses. They were most ingenious. I thought, my boy, you were doing things of that kind?"

He was much disappointed when he heard his son was only making experiments, which in his eyes were child's play, only fit for schoolboys. From that moment his face resumed its anxious expression; and when, looking up from the garden, he perceived the frogs at the window, he would shake his head in a pitying manner.

One day René told him he was going away.

When the two men said good-bye they assumed, each one, a gruff, off-hand tone of voice, an impassive visage and a stiff attitude; they separated with sullen firmness.

But the old man was weeping into his check handkerchief as he returned home, and his son, stretched on the bench of a third-class carriage, wiped his eyes as he filled his pipe.

At Reims two young fellows, shopmen apparently, got into the carriage. One of them was reading the *Petit Journal,* and telling the other the important bit of news.

"The ministerial crisis continues.—Great excitement caused at Gros-Caillou by an explosion.—The man Groult (Juste Desiré) was executed at six o'clock this morning, on the market-place at Granville."

"What had he done?" asked the friend.

"He murdered an old man. He was accused also of having poisoned a rich Englishman, but the second crime was not proved at the trial. Don't you remember the Groult affair?"

"No," said the other; then after a moment's silence:

"Does it give any details?"

" 'At four o'clock this morning the fatal engine, " he read in a low voice—Longuemare did not catch the rest; and the owner of the newspaper,

folding it up, said: "Up to the last moment he declared that the murder of his victim was not premeditated. All the same, he was an awful scoundrel. . . . I could do with a snack, couldn't you?"

In Paris, Longuemare lived in a state of dull torpor. He had still a few hundred francs left from his pay in Cochin-China, so there was no immediate need for him to work. He rose at noon and went to the Luxembourg Gardens, where he would sit on a bench among the whirling leaves the autumn wind brought down. He would hold his head till his hands left their marks on his cheeks. The first cold weather made him seem more listless and heavy. He dragged through his days in the stifling atmosphere of some little café, without even reading the papers or playing billiards.

One day in spring he met an old acquaintance—Nouilhac, a big heavy fellow, a sort of half-peasant, whose father, a farmer in Auvergne, had left him a stocking full of money, which he spent with the appetite of a glutton and the stinginess of a serf; but as he was now approaching forty years of age, he was becoming more serious.

He had bought, in his own part of the country, a forgotten thermal spring, with its mouldy establishment, and was planning how to get visitors to it. His pockets were full of bottles of mineral water,

and prospectuses illustrated with vignettes showing Roman baths and a sixteenth-century piscina, copied from some old engravings. Offering a bottle to Longuemare, he said:

"Hot springs containing sulphur, chlorine, soda, arsenic, and iodo-bromine, and naturally effervescent."

Then he told a long tale about it.

The establishment was thirty miles from Clermont, on the border of a lake, at the foot of a superb basaltic mountain. The population of the village consisted of fifteen or twenty goat-herds and thirty goitrous men and women.

Nouilhac had inherited from his father three of four tumble-down dwellings in the same village, which, repainted and repaired, could be turned into cottages for visitors. The Hôtel de César opposite the baths could accommodate from thirty to forty people. Later on, a casino might be added. They must go slowly at first, but who could say what the future would bring forth. Finally, he asked Longuemare to join him. "Come," said he; "you can be the doctor attached to the establishment."

He had a deep respect, inspired by the unanimous opinion of their common friends, for the medical talents of the ex-army surgeon. All Longuemare's comrades admitted that he possessed the eye and hand of a master.

His answer to Nouilhac was:

"Your baths are in a hole. No one will ever come to them, except perhaps a few scrofulous and scabby individuals, who will get worse there. If I go, it will be to stay the winter as well as the summer."

He accepted, without disputing, the small salary Nouilhac offered. The latter considered that the doctor of the establishment would be well paid by the large international practice he was bound to make among the foreign visitors.

Longuemare spent the next days running about Paris buying the few clothes, books, and instruments he needed. Towards six o'clock in the evening, as he was coming down the Avenue des Champs-Elysées, he stopped before a Punch and Judy show. A triple row of idlers was pressing against the cord which, passed round the trunks of trees, enclosed a space reserved for paying spectators. Behind these, small children with discouraged faces peeped between the legs of a soldier and their nurse's skirts.

A little apart from the crowd stood a bent heavy, unhealthily fat old man, whose wan face wore an expression of desolate inertia. He was dressed in a frock-coat—too short behind and too long in front—so shabby, it was rubbed yellow at the collar and wrists. He was looking at the Punch and Judy show, or rather kept his eyes in that direction, for

his look floated vaguely between sky and earth.

At the sight of Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac, Longuemare felt much moved; all his fond recollections came surging to the surface of his soul.

Fellaire shook his hand, and tried to say something, but could not find words. Longuemare, with a kind of brusque tenderness and pity, said:

"Come—come along with me."

"It just happens that I can," answered Fellaire; "I have no business to do this evening."

He was living in the Rue Truffaut, in the wilds of Batignolles, he said; and added, "It is not very central, but with the trams——"

Was it a day, or a hundred years, since they had last met they wondered, as they sat facing each other in a smoky restaurant in the Rue Montmartre.

They did not speak of her, but both saw her, in imagination, beside them.

When they were eating nuts after dinner, Longuemare told de Sisac about his plans for going to Mont-Dore, and what he was going to do there, adding quite simply:

"I am going to take you with me."

The old man, rolling his startled eyes, cried out:

"What! leave Paris! It isn't possible. One can only live in Paris—and then my business?"

Pitiful though it was, Longuemare could not help smiling.

"Come with me, there will be plenty for you to do. You will be the inspector, controller, registrar."

These titles struck de Sisac's fancy, and he declared that "he was willing to give his adhesion to an enterprise that, and for which—in short, if his experience could be of any use."

They made an appointment to meet next day. Longuemare, as he recrossed the bridge, said to himself:

"I can't help it; I keep thinking that he is my father-in-law."

. . . . . .

The first season at the Baths was fairly successful. Some Russians, and a French family from Lyons, came to Nouilhac's establishment. Fellaire stood about near the spring and tasted the water from time to time with a knowing air. His occupation was not very distinctly defined. Nouilhac would certainly not have engaged him but for Longuemare, and it was with the latter's money that he paid him.

"Let him think that you are giving him a salary," the doctor said; "and above all, don't let him think that it is mine he is drawing. I can manage for myself."

He gave a few consultations to the Russians, and was occasionally called into the mountains to see

some peasant who had sprained his ankle while on a Sunday spree.

The visitors left with the swallows—not in a flock as they did, but in couples, or alone, one after the other.

The winter came. Snow covered the valley. On the jagged black granite rocks, and on the coloured marble slabs, ice hung in stalactites. The pine trees in the ravines loomed like phantoms, big and shadowy through the mist. The horizon was closed in by a sea of darkness.

In the thermal establishment, the old-fashioned red and brown paint peeled off in flakes. Fellaire de Sisac played dominoes all day long with the landlord in the lower floor of the Hôtel de César, and Longuemare sat, his feet on the fire-dogs, smoking his pipe. From time to time he would feel the pulse in his left wrist with his right thumb, and murmur to himself in a low voice:

"Fever, tension, and acute pain in the hypochondriac region—cough, oppressed breathing, sympathetic pain in the right shoulder; nothing is wanting. I have developed a fine hepatic disease."

And he smiled, for the first time for a year four months and six days.

THE FAMISHED CAT

THE FAMISHED CAT

CHAPTER I

OR three days the November winds had been whipping the populous faubourg, now clothed in the first shadows of night. Puddles of water shone under the gas-lamps. A black mud, churned by the steps of men and horses, covered the road and the pavement. Workmen with their bags of tools on their shoulders, women returning from the cook-shop with portions of beef between two plates, scurried with bent backs before the rain with the sullen stolidity of beasts of burden.

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, tightly buttoned up in his black clothes, toiled with the populace along the muddy way leading to the top of Montmartre. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse carried his head high under his umbrella, which, much dilapidated by many bygone storms, fluttered in the wind like the wing of a big wounded bird. His jaw being prominent and his forehead receding, it was easy for his face to assume a horizontal attitude; so that his eyes, without his troubling to raise them, could see the sooty sky through the holes in the silk. Walk-

ing, now with feverish haste, now with dreamy slowness, he turned into a dark and filthy alley, edged along the wall covered with mouldy trelliswork, which surrounded a bathing establishment, and after a moment's hesitation entered an eating-house, where men, dressed like himself in torn and shabby black clothes, were silently feeding in a terrible atmosphere; the warm greasy odour of which was rendered further obnoxious by a repulsive smell of wet flannel costumes coming from the neighbouring baths.

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse bowed to the lady at the desk in his peculiar manner, flinging his head back with a grave smile. Then, having hung up his shining and battered top-hat, he sat down before a smeary marble table and smoothed his hair with the gesture which usually accompanied his meditation. The gas burnt with a hissing sound and fell full on the man's woolly hair and his mulatto face; the skin, with its colour half washed out by the snows and rains of European winters, looked dirty, as did also his wrinkled hands with their flat nails, marked at the ends by milky crescents. Without calling the waiter, without even looking towards the desk, he drew a newspaper from his pocket and began to read it in an audible voice. He hardly stopped to eat the calf's-head, of which portions

had already been served to the other silent and resigned guests.

Having eaten, they faded away one after the other into the darkness and rain. Only one, toothless and gloomy, lingered over his dried raisins. The mulatto having emptied his decanter, at the bottom of which was a deposit of lees and crust, wiped his mouth, folded his napkin, put his paper in his breast pocket with the air of a wrestler closing with his adversary, got up, took down his hat, and made towards the door. He was just stepping into the wet night when a small, purple-faced, oily man came out of a side door, grubby with greasy finger-marks, and limped into the dining-room. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse saluted the restaurant-keeper with one of his backward bows.

"Good-evening, Monsieur Godet," said the fat man. "This is bad weather we are having, and it does a deal of harm! By the way, Monsieur Godet, if you could give me something on account to-morrow, I should be much obliged. I am not the man to worry you, as you know very well, but I have a heavy payment to make at the end of the week."

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse replied in an accent at once oratorical and infantine, without pronouncing the r's, that there was money owing to him,

that he would draw on his editor next day without fail, that he could not think how he had come to neglect the eating-house keeper's bill, but it was a mere trifle, anyway. The fat man, who did not seem dazzled by these promises, answered in a drawling tone:

"Don't forget, Monsieur Godet. Good-night, Monsieur Godet."

And Godet-Laterrasse disappeared in his turn in the darkness streaked with rain, which had already swallowed up the last lean diner in Bather's Alley. All the ways of the world were open before him. He took that leading up the hill, which the tempest was besieging and drowning in a determined deluge. A blast of wind did its best to carry the mulatto off his feet, a traitorous gust turned his umbrella inside out. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse re-established the concavity of this domestic apparatus, but the silk, split in every part, floated like a black flag on the denuded framework. Under this grotesque and sinister standard he climbed up the steep steps of the Passage Cotin, which had now become a mountain torrent. He could hear nothing but the splashing of his footsteps, and the mysterious utterances of the wind. Invisible to all but himself, the vague shadows of an editor and a newspaper manager fled before him in the distance. He went up eighty steps, and stopped at a little door, over

which was a lantern hanging from a creaking cord and winking like a diseased eye. Entering the house, he stole furtively past the concierge's lodge.

A rapping against the partition called him back. He opened the glass door in an agony of apprehension. A shrill and sexless voice coming from an alcove informed him there was a letter for him on the chest of drawers. He took the letter, and going down six sticky stairs entered his room. As soon as he had lit a candle he examined the envelope suspiciously.

The post had not brought him anything pleasant for many a long day. But, when he broke the seal and began to read, his white teeth flashed out in a half smile. His childish nature, withered by poverty, brightened at the smallest piece of luck. At that moment he was glad to be alive. He turned out his pockets, and scraped together a little tobacco dust, mingled with crumbs and bits of fluff; this he stuffed into a short pipe, then he slipped voluptuously between the dirty sheets of his sofa-bed, and began to chant in a low voice the words of the letter which had so delighted him:

"Dear Sir,—I am passing through Paris with my son Remi, whom I have brought up from Brest, where he has been at school. I thought you might prepare him for his degree. In education, as in everything, I am all for ad-

vanced ideas. Will you breakfast with us to-morrow, Saturday, at eleven o'clock, at the Grand Hotel, when we can perhaps come to some arrangement?—Faithfully yours,

"A. SAINTE-LUCIE."

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, having finished chanting the letter, lighted his pipe and wrapped himself in smoke and dreams. What a caress of Fortune was this unexpected letter! He had met Sainte-Lucie in Paris towards the end of the Empire, at the house of some prominent democratic personage, and had even received a visit from him.

"It was," thought the mulatto, "at the time that I was writing articles for the *Grand Universal Encyclopædia.* I was living in a fine furnished room in a hotel in the Rue de Seine. I must have my amiable visitor's card somewhere still." Stretching out his thin brown arm he reached an old cigar box full of papers from the mantelpiece, and began to rummage in it.

The slowly accumulated contents of a drawer had doubtless been emptied bodily into the box at the time of some removal, for the papers on the top were the oldest. An envelope which he opened only recalled distant and confused souvenirs. "Ah!" he thought, "this is from my poor brother, the coffee merchant at Saint Paul. He was not attracted to Paris; he was not wrought upon as I was by ideas," and he read out haphazard:

"You must have learnt from the newspapers that a cyclone has passed over Bourbon Island and destroyed all the plantations. So I have gone into guano. And you? are you still writing rot for Parisian rags?"

"Unhappy man! unhappy man!" murmured Godet-Laterrasse. Leaning on his pillow he opened another letter in the same writing and read once more:

"I can't send you any money, because, coffee having fallen, I had to invest all my available capital while the market was glutted with low-priced products. I did a magnificent stroke of business. You will understand, therefore, that it is impossible for me to send you any money. Durand, who has just returned from Paris, tells me that you are still going in for public meetings and riots on the boulevards. You will get your head broken one of these days, and your friends will say you belonged to the secret police. When you are tired of playing the fool, come back to Bourbon. You can keep my shop; it is a lazy man's work which will suit you perfectly."

"Keep his shop! what blasphemy," cried Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse.

And he flung aside the impious letter. The bottom of the box was full of invitations to non-religious funerals, judgment summonses, bills, and

cuttings from newspapers. One of these, on the back of which was a pedicure's advertisement, illustrated by a bare foot on a stool, he read with a smile:

"One of our most valiant spirits, one of our most hardy pioneers of progress, Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, a creole from Réunion Island, is putting the finishing touches to his great book, 'The Regeneration of Society by the Black Races.' One of the principal chapters of this important work is to appear immediately in *The Literary Funnel.*"

"Alas!" thought Godet-Laterrasse, "just as the chapter was about to appear *The Literary Funnel* died. How many journals perish thus in the flower of their youth!"

At last he found among a handful of visiting cards the one he was looking for. He considered it attentively and read it over:

ALIDOR SAINTE-LUCIE

BARRISTER

Formerly Minister of Public Instruction, and of the Navy, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, President of the Haïtian Artistic Commission

GRAND HOTEL, PARIS

And, in the midst of the smoke which filled the room, Godet-Laterrasse saw a vision of the gigantic mulatto arriving from Haïti, all smiles and money. He blew out the candle and went to sleep.

His dreams were peopled with spectres. The shade of the restaurant-keeper in Bather's Alley advanced limping towards him, and said, in a terrifyingly gentle voice, "Don't forget me, Monsieur Godet."

It was nearly nine o'clock, and it was still raining, when the first streak of day entered the room: when it did come, it was only the disgusting reflection of a dirty borrowed light. The room had no other outlook than on to the wall propping up the neighbouring house, a house which, with its five plaster storeys, overlooked all the roofs in the passage. This rugged bulging wall, cracked, broken, green, and sweating, was terminated by the brickwork balcony of an Italian terrace five or six yards higher than Godet-Laterrasse's room, which it clothed in eternal shadow. The window was separated from the wall by a boggy alley, two yards wide, strewn with salad leaves, egg-shells, and the remnants of paper kites.

When the mulatto awoke, he looked at the dripping window-panes, picked up his heavy boots, which had left a damp mark on the floor, and put

them on regretfully. Then, having finished his austere toilet, he seized the ruins of his umbrella, and left the room. A confused grumbling met him as he passed the concierge's lodge.

"I have not forgotten your little bill, Madame Alexandre," he said.

He mounted the ten topmost steps of the Passage Cotin, and walked, in a river of mud, past the desolate façade of the Swiss Chalet, and the stone yards of the Votive Church. At the bottom of the Rue Lepic he stopped short, so as not to walk over two bits of straw which formed a cross on the pavement, in front of a packer's shop. Having avoided this danger (for he was sure that to walk over a cross would bring him ill luck), his lofty mood returned to him, and with his magnificent head thrown back again he continued on his way, an intellectual conqueror, towards the heart of Paris, carrying high the eight-pointed framework of his dilapidated umbrella, which looked like the complicated weapon of a savage warrior.

CHAPTER II

ONSIEUR ALIDOR SAINTE-LUCIE, son of a rich merchant of Port-au-Prince, studied for the law in Paris, and returned to Haïti to be present at the coronation of Soulouque, crowned emperor under the name of Faustin I. As a coloured man, and a man of means, he had everything to fear from his black Majesty. He went bravely ahead in the face of danger, and made himself remarked in the imperial palace by his zeal in upholding the sovereign's policy. Appointed Attorney-General at the imperial court of Port-au-Prince, he had a few of his fellow-citizens shot, quite unmaliciously. He accepted from the emperor the office of Minister of Public Instruction, and of the Navy; then, thinking that he perceived a secret but energetic opposition springing up against him, he took a holiday, and made a trip to France.

From Paris he wrote letters warmly supporting the revolution which put an end to the sanguinary gaieties of the black empire, and returned to Haïti to be elected member of the Chamber of Deputies. His first act in the Assembly was to introduce a measure proposing to erect an expiatory monument

to the memory of the victims of tyranny. Certainly, the least that the former Attorney-General could do for some of these victims, was to give them a tomb.

The project was taken into consideration, the proposition carried, and the citizen, Alidor Sainte-Lucie, was made president of the commission charged with the execution of this national work. Monsieur Alidor quite understood the advantage which this presidentship conferred on him. Whenever there was any shooting going on in the island he took out a passport and went to Paris to get new plans for the monument. He adored Paris because of its little theatres and its political cafés. At the end of twenty years the artistic commission was still in full activity.

Monsieur Alidor Sainte-Lucie was a very handsome mulatto, with an immense athletic frame. He carried his copper-coloured face proudly, and had, in spite of his flat nose, a grand air, especially since his hair, retreating from his brow, had left it shining like bronze. He made no attempt to disguise his age, and wore his grizzled beard clipped close. Very particular about his personal appearance, he affected white waistcoats and patent leather shoes, and saturated himself with heavy, sickly perfumes.

Thus well dressed and scented, his powerful figure showing off well in clothes of faultless Eng-

lish cut, he walked up and down his room at the Grand Hotel, waiting for the tutor, while his son drew caricatures on the cover of a book, and a waiter laid a table for three persons, near the fire.

Sketches, models, plaster casts, sepia drawings, photographs, and plans of every sort for the commemorative monument to the victims of tyranny, lay about and encumbered the furniture. On a side table was a little pyramid of painted plaster covered with gilded palms; on the secretary stood a terra-cotta column surmounted by a sort of winged monkey, with the following inscription on the pedestal: *"To the Genius of Black Liberty."* A photograph on the chimney-piece in front of the mirror represented a negress standing before a sarcophagus, on which she was depositing a roll of paper bearing these simple words: *"Artistic Commission; Monsieur Sainte-Lucie, president."* Nothing more!

On the ground was a half-open hand in cast iron, a gigantic hand emerging from a curtain-like sleeve. A label hung from the wrist: *"Portion of Design No. 17, full size, E.D."*

Three little golden brown rolls lay on the table-napkins. Monsieur Sainte-Lucie looked at the clock. Perhaps the crisp glazed crust of the bread aroused his appetite, or perhaps he was afraid of being kept waiting; his sleepy eyes, which a few moments before had shone so gently under their

somewhat distended lids, suddenly flashed with a wild light. They softened again, however, when Godet-Laterrasse appeared in the doorway. As the waiter held back the curtain, one saw first a chin with an Adam's apple showing prominently above a white cotton cravat. Godet-Laterrasse bowed.

"My son, Remi," said Sainte-Lucie, presenting the young man, who, consenting to leave his unfinished sketch, came forward with a lazy swagger.

He was a handsome boy, with a pure olive complexion, who rolled his big, bored-looking eyes, and seemed to open his great sensual mouth at random.

When they sat down, Monsieur Sainte-Lucie took up twice as much room as Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse. The mulatto from Haïti was of a warm, golden tone, which appeared richer still when contrasted with the other's which seemed to have been smeared with soot and then badly washed. The mulatto from Bourbon was weak-looking, rumpled, and muddy; but his naïvely pompous expression, and his childish pride, inspired the kind of pity one feels for a learned dog or an unfortunate genius.

The affair which brought them together was broached between the devilled kidneys and the green peas. It was Godet-Laterrasse who opened the question.

"Well, my friend," said he, tapping his future

pupil on the shoulder, "so we are going to take our degree at the old university?"

Monsieur Alidor rose to the bait and said, crumbling his bread nonchalantly:

"As I wrote to you, my dear Godet—and, by-the-bye, I had a great deal of trouble to find your address. It was Brandt—you know Brandt, the tailor—who discovered it by the merest chance; it seems he was looking for you also."

"It is quite possible," said Godet-Laterrasse, making a movement as though to brush something away.

"As I wrote to you, I am counting on you to prepare this scamp here for his degree, and to make a man of him."

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse braced himself against the back of his chair till his head was almost horizontal, and said:

"Before we go further, my dear Sainte-Lucie, I must make my profession of faith. My principles are unshakable. I am a man of iron, whom you may break, but you cannot bend."

"I know, I know," said Sainte-Lucie, as he continued to crumble his bread.

"The education which I shall give your son will be essentially a liberal education."

"I know, I know."

"It is a civic degree which I shall ensure our

Remi winning gloriously. In preparing him for it, I shall consider not so much the candidate for university honours as the legislator of the Haïtian Republic. After all, what does that pedantic old witch of a university matter to me?"

The former Minister, who was a practical as well as an eloquent man, signed to him with his eyebrows not to talk in this way before his pupil; but the liberal preceptor, carried away by the sublimity of his personal ideas, went on:

"The university means monopoly, the university means routine, the university represents the enemy! Down with the university!" Then laying his hand on the arm of the young man, who seemed too indifferent to be surprised: "My friend, if I prepare you to take your degree, I shall teach you the primordial truths; so that when, on leaving my hands, you present yourself before the examiners at the Sorbonne, you will be their judge rather than they yours. You can say to the Caros and the Taillandiers, 'I have principles, and you have none. It is that man of iron, it is Godet-Laterrasse, who has formed my mind.' Ha! these fine gentlemen will know who I am some day!"

During this speech young Remi was tranquilly occupied in surreptitiously extracting lumps of sugar from the basin and slipping them into his pocket.

Monsieur Alidor, who was naturally inclined to appreciate eloquence, thought this method of preparing for an examination was fine, but a little perilous. As he was naturally very obstinate, however, he did not give up the idea of confiding his son to the creole from Bourbon.

"Remi," he said, carelessly drawing a louis from his pocket, "go and get some cigars downstairs. Say that they are for me."

Left alone with his guest, he continued to crumble his bread silently. He had a special way of holding his tongue, which was mysterious and imposing. Then, in the gentle voice of a man sure of his own strength, he pointed out to the future preceptor that it was a question of working to pass the examinations—an essentially practical enterprise; that the programme must be followed to the letter; and that, as a matter of fact, Greek and Latin were of more importance than primordial truths.

"Certainly, certainly," replied the man of iron.

Asked if he had had any experience of teaching, his reply was vague.

They then came to the question of money.

The former Minister asked the tutor to accept a monthly salary of two hundred francs; but Godet-Laterrasse refused to consider this bagatelle, with an indignant shake of the head.

Remi came back with the cigars, followed by a

slight good-looking man whose golden beard swept his chest. He did not take off the small soft hat he wore on the back of his head like a cap.

"You are welcome, Labanne," said Sainte-Lucie, without rising to greet him. "Will you have a cigar?"

Labanne's only answer was to take an amber-mounted meerschaum pipe and a tobacco-pouch with the arms of Brittany from his pocket. He walked round the room, looking with the air of a connoisseur at the photograph on the mantelpiece. Finally he threw a side-glance at the terra-cotta column.

"Who," said he, "is the joker who furnished you with this model of a stove-pipe?" Then, affecting to be interested in the gilded pyramid, he closed his eyes and said: "They have forgotten the slit to put the pennies through." As the others did not understand, he added: "Of course, the thing was meant for a money-box."

"What can I do? I take what is given me," said Sainte-Lucie philosophically. "You haven't brought your design, have you, Labanne?"

"I am working at it," replied the sculptor. "No later than yesterday I read in a medical journal a most interesting article on the *pigmentum* of the black races; and I bought this morning, at a book-stall on the Quai Voltaire kept by a friend of mine,

a treatise on the geological formation of the Antilles."

"And what for?" asked Sainte-Lucie absolutely at a loss, although he knew the man he was dealing with.

"If I wish to execute my idea for the monument," said Labanne in a disdainful tone, "I must, before I even touch the clay, have read fifteen hundred volumes. All is contained in all. It is an artificial and wrong method to attempt to treat any subject in an isolated fashion. Hullo! you here, Godet! By what chance? I didn't see you before."

The mulatto from Bourbon Island, who was leaning against the mantelpiece, his right hand stuck between the buttons of his frock-coat, smiled bitterly.

The sculptor, having re-lighted his pipe, went on:

"I am not merely a natural force, a brute force. I am not like the bird who laid *that* monkey," pointing with the stem of his pipe to the genius of Black Liberty. "I am an intelligence, a conscience; I put thought into my work."

Monsieur Alidor Sainte-Lucie nodded his head approvingly; but he insisted on the sculptor giving him a drawing, a simple sketch, which he could show to the Commissioners. He was leaving for Haïti in a week.

Labanne flung himself on the sofa and seemed lost in profound meditation.

At last, after knocking the ashes from his pipe and spitting on the carpet, he looked up at the ceiling and said:

"What right have we to create imaginary beings? Phidias, or Michael-Angelo, or So-and-So makes a figure which has a semblance of life, which forces itself on our attention and penetrates to our imaginations. It is the Athene of the Parthenon, it is Moses, or the Nymph of Asnières. It is spoken about, it is dreamed about. There is a being the more in the world! What will it do then? It will perturb minds, corrupt hearts, inflame the senses, and make a fool of the public generally. Every work of art, every creation of human genius is a dangerous illusion and a guilty fraud. Sculptors, painters, and poets are magnificent liars, sublime scoundrels—nothing more. I who now speak to you, I was madly in love for six months with the Antiope of the Salon Carré, which means that for six months that rascal of a Correggio had the laugh on me.

"Do you know my friend Branchut the moralist? He is ugly, but he doesn't know it. He is poor and full of talent. His knowledge of Greek is the astonishment of all the cafés of the Quartier, and he has read Hegel. He lives on a roll of

bread and a drink from the street fountains. When he has finished his bird-like repast, he writes divine things in the public gardens, or under doorways if it is raining. When he remembers, he comes and sleeps in my studio. One night he wrote a most subtle and learned commentary on the Phædo on the wall. Such is Branchut.

"Last year I lent him a coat and took him to see a Russian princess whose bust I was going to do; but she wanted the bust in marble and I could only see it in bronze. One can but realize what one sees, so the bust was never done. She was looking for a professor of literature for her daughter Fédora, an extremely beautiful girl. I proposed Branchut, and he was accepted. Thanks to my recommendation and his shabby appearance, he was paid a month in advance. He bought two shirts, took a furnished room, and made acquaintance with German sausage.

"At the sixth lesson, while he was explaining the mechanism of Homer's epic, he pinched Mademoiselle Fédora's waist so furiously that she fled uttering shrill cries. He waited, ready to make reparation for his misdeed—he would have married his noble pupil, if necessary; but he was flung out of the door. I found him in my studio that evening. 'Alas!' he said, 'it is all the fault of Saint Preux. Oh, Julie! oh, Jean-Jacques!' So you see

Rousseau wrote his magnificent and passionate novel and created his:

> " 'Julie, amante faible et tombée avec gloire,'

just to lead my poor friend Branchut the moralist to make a fool of himself."

Monsieur Alidor Sainte-Lucie suppressed a yawn. His son, his head resting on his two hands, listened as though he were at the theatre. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, with a burning eye and a heaving chest, was preparing a crushing rejoinder; but Labanne rose, went to a side-table and picked up a newspaper. While he was tearing off a bit to light his pipe, his eye followed the printed lines with the instinct of the born reader.

"I say, Sainte-Lucie," he asked, "is it possible that you believe in democracy?"

At these words Godet-Laterrasse drew himself together with a little, dry, cracking noise, like that of a pistol being loaded. But the former Minister only replied by an enigmatical smile.

Labanne stated his opinions. He liked aristocracies; he would have them strong, extravagant, violent. Art only flourished under an aristocracy, he said. He regretted the cruel, elegant morals of a military nobility.

"What a mean epoch we live in!" he said. "In

depriving politics of their two necessary attributes —poison and the dagger—you have made them innocent, stupid, dull, chattering and bourgeois. Society is dying for want of a Borgia. In a democracy you will have neither impressive statues, nor marble palaces, nor eloquent and great-hearted courtesans, nor chiselled sonnets, nor concerts in gardens, nor golden goblets, nor exquisite crimes, nor perils, nor adventures. You will be happy in a flat, foolish, and deadly way. So be it."

For some minutes Godet-Laterrasse had been making jerky movements, like a man who restrains himself with difficulty.

"Marvellous! marvellous!" he cried. "You are brilliantly witty, Monsieur Labanne; but remember, there are certain pleasantries which are blasphemous."

He took his hat, shook his pupil's hand, and told Monsieur Alidor he wished to say a few words to him in the hall.

Labanne heard the chinking of money, and when Monsieur Alidor re-appeared:

"What an innocent creature!" said Labanne; "but there is no harm in him."

"Hush," said Sainte-Lucie, and whispered something in Labanne's ear.

"I wish I had known you wanted a tutor. I

would have sent you my friend Branchut the moralist. Well, I am going back to the Quartier. Good-bye."

This was how he spoke of what was to him the Quartier *par excellence*—the Quartier Latin.

Sainte-Lucie begged the sculptor to tell Remi, who did not know Paris, of a decent hotel near the Luxembourg.

Labanne, stroking his flaming beard, and Remi moving with the supple swing characteristic of his race, were descending the gilded staircase of the hotel side by side, when Sainte-Lucie, leaning over the banister, called out to his son:

"I warn you at once, in case I should forget, that I shall most probably not go to see General Télémaque; but I should be glad if you would pay him a visit, and it would please your mother. He lives at Courbevoie, near the barracks. Good-bye, good-bye."

CHAPTER III

EMI could only recall vaguely the house where he was born at Port-au-Prince—the lordly mansion, in the Louis XVI. style, full of mutilated statues and half-effaced emblems; the dilapidated, crumbling inner court, planted with banana-trees; the heavy mahogany arm-chairs, ornamented with sphinxes' heads, in which he slept in the shade in the heavy noon-day silence; the luminous gaudy town, amusing as a big bazaar; and his godmother, Olivette's shop. How often, hidden behind the big cases, he had stolen the negress's bananas and sapotillas.

He could remember his mother; her burning eyes, imperious nose, greedy mouth and magnificent bronze chest, showing through a white muslin corsage, had imprinted their image on the child's memory. How often he had seen her, saturated with strong scents, her head flung back and her eyes flooded with tears, exasperating Monsieur Alidor by her brief and disdainful replies. One day he had thrown himself on her, grinding his teeth with fury, and had brought his stick down on the most beautiful shoulders in the Antilles.

But Remi had seen many things besides these. He had seen the bombardment and burning of Port-au-Prince, the pillaging, the massacres, the executions, and then more massacres and more executions. He had seen his godmother, Olivette, lying murdered in the midst of her staved-in barrels, and her assassins dead drunk with her whisky.

It was about this time that they made a long sea voyage, and landed one evening in a splendidly lighted city. France pleased him from the first. He was sent to a school in the Rue du Château at Nantes, on the benches of which he dragged out a monotonous and dreary existence, never ceasing to shiver. During the long lesson hours, he sucked sweets and drew caricatures. Every Thursday and every Sunday throughout the year the pupils, two and two in a long file, went for a walk under the old elms on the fortifications by the side of the fair, wide Loire.

He hated these promenades in the wind and the rain. He would pretend to be ill to be dispensed from them, and to be admitted to the infirmary, where he could huddle under the blankets, like a boa-constrictor in a glass case.

But he had muscles of steel when it came to jumping over the schoolhouse wall, and running to the other end of the town to buy a bottle of rum to make punch with, in the dormitory at night.

He took his studies very easily, drew the portraits of all his masters in his copybooks, passed into the rhetoric class, learnt nothing, forgot everything, was sent to Paris and confided to the care of Godet-Laterrasse.

Monsieur Sainte-Lucie had been at sea for three weeks, and the tutor had already begun the exercise of his functions by promenading his pupil on the outside of omnibuses from the Boulevard Saint-Michel to the Buttes Montmartre, and from the Madeleine to the Bastille.

Then he disappeared for a week. Remi, advised by Labanne, was living up under the tiles in a very good hotel in the Rue des Feuillantines; he got up at noon, went out to breakfast, walked about in the sunshine, contemplating with something of a savage's delight the imitation jewellery and other attractive rubbish in the shop windows, till at five o'clock it was time to sip his sweetened vermouth. Not having heard of his tutor for eight days, he had almost forgotten him, when, on the morning of the ninth, he received a telegram, making an appointment to meet him at two o'clock on the Pont des Saints Pères.

It was freezing, and a biting wind was blowing over the Seine. Remi took shelter, side by side with a policeman, against the cast-iron pedestal of one of the four plaster figures adorning the bridge;

he stood with his shoulders hunched, and every now and then, to relieve the monotony of waiting, would stretch out his neck and watch a cargo of bullocks' horns being unloaded on the Pont Saint Nicolas. He had been there half-an-hour, and had just decided to make for the nearest café, when Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse emerged from the Louvre gateway, carrying a portfolio under his arm.

"I asked you to meet me to-day," he said, "so that we might buy the most necessary books. I am not going to bother about Virgil and Cicero; if you should need them you can find them easily enough at any of the second-hand stalls in the Rue Cujas. I am only going to see about the important ones, which will form your conscience as a man and as a citizen."

By-and-by they came to the Quai Voltaire, where they went into a bookseller's.

"Have you the works of Proudhon, Quinet, Cabet, and Esquiros?" asked Godet-Laterrasse.

The bookseller had these works, and he made a packet of them under the eyes of the buyers—a packet which Remi saw, with stupefaction, mount up like a tower.

"Sir," he said, simply, to the shopman, just as he was tying the string, "please add to the packet two or three novels by Paul de Kock. I began

one at Nantes which amused me very much, but my class-master took it from me."

The bookseller replied in a dignified tone that he did not "keep" novels, and he was beginning again to tie the string when Godet-Laterrasse stopped him. He had been thinking, and the result of his reflection was, that he borrowed from his pupil the two first volumes of Michelet's "History of France"; he wanted to look up something, he said.

They shook hands outside, and Laterrasse called out, as he scrambled on to his omnibus:

"Dig into Quinet this evening—hard."

For a moment his black silhouette stood out clearly on the top of the 'bus, then it sank, and was lost among the outlines of the ordinary people seated on the double row of benches.

When evening came, Remi was but little disposed to return to his room, where the fundamental books awaited him. He took the way to the Boulevard Saint-Michel instead, and walked towards Bullier's.

On reaching the Moorish door of the public ball-room, under which a crowd of students, shopmen, and girls were pouring in through a semicircle of gaping workmen and women, he caught sight of Labanne's golden beard. The sculptor was standing on the opposite pavement by a lamp-post, and in spite or the frost which powdered the trees, and the

wind whipping the gas flame, he was reading a newspaper.

Sainte-Lucie went up to him.

"Excuse me for interrupting you," he said. "What you are reading must be very interesting."

"Not at all," replied Labanne, putting the paper in his pocket. "I was reading mechanically something very stupid. Will you come with me to 'The Famished Cat'?"

They stopped at the narrowest, the greasiest, the blackest, the smokiest, and the nastiest part of the Rue Saint-Jacques, and went into a shop full of little tables, at the end of which was a glass partition hung with white curtains. There were paintings on the walls, on the partition, on the ceiling even. For the most part they were bold, violent sketches, whose brilliant colour under the flickering of the two gas-jets was dazzling, in spite of the thick smoky atmosphere. Sainte-Lucie, who was very fond of pictures, at once singled out the most arresting canvases—a raven in the snow, and the nude body of an old woman hanging head down; a raw sirloin of beef wrapped in a piece of paper; and above all, a gutter-cat on a roof among the chimney-pots, outlining against an enormous ruddy moon its lean black back arched like a mediæval bridge. This work, by a young master of the impressionist school, served as a sign for the establish-

ment. Several young fellows were smoking and drinking round the tables.

A fat little woman with carefully dressed hair, the bib of whose white apron swelled like a sail, looked at Labanne with tender vivacity. Grains of gunpowder seemed to sparkle in her eyes. She asked the sculptor for the terra-cotta cat he had promised her to put in the window between the dishes of sauer-kraut and salad bowls of stewed prunes.

"I have not forgotten your tabby—oh, full-handed Virginie," replied Labanne; "but I don't see him lean enough and famished enough as yet. Furthermore, I have only read five or six volumes on cats."

Virginie, who was content to wait, told Labanne that it was most amiable of him to bring a new friend, that Monsieur Mercier and Monsieur Dion were already there, and then disappeared behind the partition—to the immediate neighbourhood of a water-tap, no doubt, for she could be heard rinsing glasses.

The new-comers sat down at a table, at which were already seated two guests, to whom Sainte-Lucie was presented. The creole soon learnt that Dion, very young, thin, and fair, was a lyric poet, and that Mercier, small and dark, with glasses on his nose, was something very vague and very im-

portant. It was hot in the tavern, and Sainte-Lucie, feeling quite at his ease, smiled so that his big mouth gaped; while Virginie, observing him closely through the partition, concluded that he was handsome and distinguished looking. She admired his smooth, clear cheeks, so like the metal of the saucepans she polished.

The poet Dion asked Labanne, in a voice at once gentle and bitter, what had become of Bishop Gozlin.

For some time past there had been much talk at "The Famished Cat" about a statue of Bishop Gozlin, the order for which had been given, it was said, to Labanne, and which was destined to fill one of the niches of the new town-hall; this Labanne admitted, but produced no proof. He said he could not see Bishop Gozlin standing up in a niche; he could only see him seated in his episcopal chair.

Sainte-Lucie drank a glass of beer.

"You know," said young Dion, "that we are starting a Review. Mercier has promised me an article; haven't you, Mercier? You, Labanne, will do the fine arts. Monsieur Sainte-Lucie, I hope you will also give us something. We lock to you to deal with the colonial question."

Sainte-Lucie had seen so much that nothing could surprise him. He was drinking—he was warm—he was happy. "I am very sorry not to be able to

render you such a slight service," he replied, "but I have just come from Nantes, where I was at school, and I don't know anything about the colonial question. Besides, I am not a writer."

Dion was stupefied. He could not understand any one not being a writer; but he remembered that creoles are rather strange people.

"Well," he said, "I shall publish my 'Wild Love' in the first number. You know my 'Wild Love'?

"Very old and bowed down, worn by ancient despair,
I would wander for aye in the night of thy hair." [1]

"Did you write that?" cried Sainte-Lucie with sincere enthusiasm. "Why, it is beautiful."

And he emptied his glass; he was delighted.

"Have you any funds for your Review?" asked the sceptic Labanne.

"Certainly," replied the poet. "My grandmother has given me three hundred francs."

Labanne was reduced to silence. He turned over the pages of some pamphlets he had bought on the Quais that afternoon.

"This is a very curious volume," he said, looking at a little book with red edges. "It is a treatise by Saumaise (*Salmasius*) on usury (*de usuris*). I shall give it to Branchut."

[1] "Très vieux, ployé, fletri par d'anciennes détresses,
Je veux errer sans fin dans la nuit de tes tresses."

Then they recollected that Branchut had not come to "The Famished Cat" that evening.

"How is poor old Branchut-du-Tic?" asked the poet Dion. "Is he still falling at the feet of Russian princesses? He must give us an article for the Review."

Sainte-Lucie asked Labanne if this Monsieur Branchut-du-Tic was the professor of literature he had heard him speak of one day at the Grand Hotel.

"The same, young man," said Labanne. "You will see him. But I must tell you that his name is simply Claude Branchut. His nose, which is very long, is agitated by nervous shivers, and afflicted with a strange undulating movement; hence the nickname we have bestowed on him. For the matter of that, Cato of Utica (*Caton d'Utique*) and Branchut-du-Tic are both Stoics."

"Monsieur Sainte-Lucie," said the poet, "I will read my verses to you, so that you can make your criticisms before they are published."

"No, no," cried Mercier, his little round face contracting under his spectacles; "you can read your verses to him when you are alone."

Then the conversation turned on æsthetics. Dion considered that poetry was the natural and primeval language.

Mercier replied sourly.

"It was cries, not verses, which were the primitive and natural language. The first men did not exclaim:

"Yea, to his temple I come the Eternal to worship."

They said, "*hoo hoo hoo! ba ba ba! quack!*" But are you a mathematician? No? Then it is no use arguing with you. I only argue with an adversary who knows the mathematical method."

Labanne asserted that poetry was a sublime monstrosity, a magnificent disease. For him, a fine poem was a fine crime, and nothing else.

"Allow me," said Mercier, adjusting his spectacles. "How far have you gone in mathematical analysis? I shall know by your answers if I can argue with you or not."

Sainte-Lucie, emptying a fresh glass, said to himself: "My new friends are very peculiar, but very agreeable."

Finally, as he understood literally nothing of the discussion, which became heated, he gave up trying to follow the tangled thread of discourse, and let his naïf bold eyes wander round the room. They encountered the amorous eyes of the fat Virginie, who, leaning against the glass door of the partition, was watching him as she wiped her red hands.

"She is a very agreeable woman," he thought.

Having drunk another *bock,* he became more confirmed in this opinion.

The tavern had emptied little by little. The founders of the Review alone remained round the saucers piled up on the table, like two porcelain towers in a Chinese village.

Virginie was about to pull down the iron shutters in front, when the door opened and a long pale person came in, dressed in a very short summer-jacket, with the collar turned up. Two enormous, flat, and abominably shod feet protruded in front of him.

"It is Branchut," cried the Committee. "How do you do, Branchut?"

But Branchut was in a sombre mood.

"Labanne," he said, "you took away, by mistake I sincerely hope, the key of your studio, and if I had not met you here, I should inevitably have had to pass the night out of doors."

Branchut spoke with Ciceronian elegance. His eyes rolled terribly, and his nose twitched nervously from the root to the nostrils, but his mouth emitted only the purest and most dulcet sounds.

Labanne handed over his key, with an apology. Branchut would drink neither beer, coffee, cognac, nor chartreuse. He would not drink anything. Dion asked him for an article for his Review, but the moralist required a deal of coaxing.

"Take his commentary on the Phædo," said Labanne, "which is written in charcoal all along the wall of my studio. You can have it copied, unless you prefer to take the wall to the printer."

As soon as they left off asking him, he promised to write something. "It shall be," he said, "a study in a particular style on the philosophers."

He coughed, an oratorical cough, picked up an empty glass, placed it in front of him and proceeded leisurely.

"This is my point of view. There are two sorts of philosophers: those who place themselves behind the glass, like Hegel, and those who place themselves between the glass and myself, like Kant. Do you understand the point of view?"

Dion understood the point of view, so Branchut was able to continue.

"When," he said, "a philosopher is behind my glass, do you know what I do——?"

Here, having put out one of the lights and turned down the other, Virginie warned the gentlemen that it was half-past twelve, and they must go. Branchut, Mercier, and Labanne went out one after the other, stooping under the half-lowered shutter.

Sainte-Lucie, left alone in the dark shop, seized Virginie round the waist and gave her three or four kisses, wherever he could snatch them, on her neck or on her ear. Virginie resisted a moment, then

she burst into sobs, and melted into the mulatto's arms.

Branchut, meanwhile, standing on the pavement, was saying to Labanne: "Do you think I would take my glass and put it behind the philosopher? No! Or take the philosopher and——?"

"Aren't you coming, Sainte-Lucie?" cried the poet Dion, who was counting on reciting his verses to the creole all the way home.

But Sainte-Lucie did not answer.

CHAPTER IV

IT was snowing that morning; the muffled sound of the passing carriages came heavily through the windows of "The Famished Cat." A livid light threw up the pictures on the wall harshly, and made the painted figures look like corpses. Remi was seated at a little table in the deserted shop, devouring a beefsteak and potatoes, while Virginie stood motionless in front of him, her hands folded on her apron, her eyes contemplating him with the expression of a saint.

"It is tender, isn't it?" she said effusively. "Have you enough? There is a fine cut of cold roast beef in the kitchen; will you have some? You don't drink anything."

He was eating and drinking as hard as he could, while she eyed him devoutly. She said:

"I have given you some Gruyère cheese, which is so good it is *creeping*. Monsieur Potrel was very fond of Gruyère, especially when it crept."

Remi went on eating.

Then Virginie gave him fruit and jam in addition. She remained absorbed for a long time in her mystic meditation, then sighed and said:

"Perhaps I am wrong in doing as I do. You will be like all the others, Monsieur Sainte-Lucie. All men are alike. But I am not like the average woman. When I attach myself to some one it is for life. I have told you how Potrel behaved to me. Now, frankly, was that the way to act? A man for whom I did everything. I mended his linen; I would have gone to the stake for him. He was clever, talented, everything, but he was ungrateful."

And the afflicted eyes of the lady turned to the picture of "The Famished Cat," as though to bid it bear witness to the ingratitude of Potrel.

Her ample chest heaved, her three chins trembled, as she added in a stifled voice:

"And to think that I am not sure that I don't still love him! If you were to abandon me I don't know what I should do. Are you coming this evening, darling?—What can I offer you, gentlemen?"

This last phrase, accompanied by a smile, was addressed to two customers who came in just then.

Sainte-Lucie was happy; he had been plucked gloriously by the examiners, but he warmed himself at every friendly stove, laughed his big sensual laugh, and amused himself with everything he saw and heard, without troubling about anything further. The very slightly dissimulated favour with which Virginie regarded him had won him the re-

spect of the guests at "The Famished Cat." Women mark with a distinctive sign the men they favour.

He found Labanne's studio even more attractive than Virginie's room. But the stove was never lighted. This made Remi angry; he was already a good draughtsman, and was beginning to paint. Labanne said:

"That fellow draws by instinct. He has no ideas, but he has the touch. I really believe that one must be as stupid as Potrel to model as well as he does."

Godet-Laterrasse had tried several times to recapture his pupil. He would come down sometimes towards mid-day, outside an omnibus from the heights of Montmartre, would burst breathlessly into Remi's room and cry out:

"Dig into Tacitus. Cheer up!"

He would say emphatically: *Nox eadem Britannici necem atque rogum conjunxit.*[1] Then he would get muddled over certain grammatical difficulties from which he would extricate himself by wandering remarks about the great writer, who, he said, had branded the foreheads of tyrants with a red-hot iron.

The lesson over, he would get up, and with a lordly gesture lay hold of two or three volumes of Prudhon or Quinet, which slumbered unopened on

[1] A single night witnessed the death and the obsequies of Britannicus.

the chest of drawers, and saying that he wished to refer to them, would put them under his arm. Remi never saw them again. In a few months' time there was nothing but a few odd books left of the enormous packet, and these he took one day and sold to a bookseller in the Rue Soufflot. There was no longer any talk about the fundamental works.

CHAPTER V

IME went by. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse came now and then, to give his pupil a lesson. "The Famished Cat" did not occupy all of Remi's mind; he would stay in his room, munching exotic dainties, which he bought at the creole grocery in the Rue Tronchet.

Every day, now the weather was fine, he would open his window and look out into the street. He liked to see the horses go by; they seemed to him thin in the collar, long in the body, and big in the crupper. Of the women who passed below across the front of the hotel, he could only see the tops of their hats, their hair, their skirts puffed out behind, and occasionally a chin and a bust under it. He noticed the graceful swing or the comical waddle of all these creatures, going on their easy or difficult way. Such fugitive aspects of life amused him, and he did not spoil the spectacle by reflection. For no deep thought had as yet germinated under his thick hair.

What interested him most was the house opposite, which reared in front of his hotel its façade of new stone, with five windows to each storey. Through

the half-open windows he could see bits of the wall papers, the woodwork of the dining-room, ends of gilded picture frames, and corners of furniture. All these things, diminished by distance (for the street was wide), appeared to him of the size and importance of a toy. The people who moved about in the rooms looked like marvellously finished dolls. If some startled head suddenly popped up among the tiles, through a skylight, and showed in the sunshine a bald cranium or a pair of winking eyes, the creole would go off in a long fit of laughter, and be inspired with dozens of sketches, which he afterwards tore up. In a few days he was familiar with all the people who moved about in the great stone hive across the way.

On the balcony of the fifth floor a half-pay captain (such he most surely was) sowed flower seeds in a box. On the intermediate storeys servants were to be seen beating fur rugs at the windows. Sometimes Remi would see a broom moving in front of the furniture, somnolent under its shroud-like coverings against the white panels. On the ground floor a house agent's clerk stood at a high desk and wrote throughout the day.

But Remi's eyes turned most frequently to the rooms on the fourth floor. There was never anything strange or mysterious there, nothing voluptuous, nothing which could call the blood to the

young man's cheeks. The only remarkable thing about the windows was a cage full of canaries and a very small pot of flowers. The apartment lighted by these windows was occupied by a middle-aged lady, slow but active and calm in her movements: her placid face, which appeared first at one window and then at another, was crowned by beautiful hair, which was nevertheless getting a little wide in the parting. Her daughter, who was still a child in short frocks, had inherited her mother's hair, but it was fairer and more luminous in quality, abundant and rich; she wore it separated in two masses by a fine line. She moved about like a boy, and did not know what to do with her arms and legs.

Remi entered, unseen, into the intimacy of these two people; he knew all the little monotonous events of their existence, the time for meals and for lessons, the time to go for a walk, and to bring in the bird-cage, the time when, armed with notepaper and books, to go off to classes. He knew that the ladies went out at eleven o'clock every Sunday, with prayer-books in their hands. At ten o'clock every morning during the week, the young girl sat down to the piano, whose brass handle shone near the window in the gilded drawing-room. Remi could see two little red hands, child's hands, running up and down the notes, playing scales he could not hear.

But she did not stay very long seated on the music-stool before the piano. She came to the window, and, if it was shut, lifted up the white curtain and looked into the street with frank audacity, and pressed the end of a small nose against the glass so that it became flat and white: then she would disappear as she had come, as a bird takes flight, without any appreciable reason. Both mother and daughter had large limpid eyes, childish eyes, emotionless eyes, which seemed to say, "Nothing has ever troubled, or ever will trouble, our affectionate peacefulness." The mother, who had no doubt been a widow for many years, was the quieter of the two. The kindly nature of the plump woman was visible in all her gestures, affectionate without being caressing, vigilant without being tiresome. Mademoiselle was more *brusque*. One day she even opened the window and leaned out on the balcony and made signs to two of her companions at church or school who were passing in the street below.

She did not show the slightest confusion when her mother fetched her in, and sent the maid, as Remi supposed, to ask the young ladies upstairs: they came up and evidently had very funny things to say to each other, for all three laughed merrily. And their laughter reached Remi's ears, across the

wide roadway, like the scarcely perceptible sound of scattering pearls.

Every day Remi walked by the Luxembourg Gardens, through the railings in the light morning mist he could see the undulating lawns and the groups of exotic plants. He would go on to the Rue Carnot and into the studio, the key of which was always left for him under the mat.

Labanne's studio was so full of books that it might have been taken for a second-hand shop. Books were piled round abandoned studies, shrinking under their dry cloths. The floor was entirely covered with piled up books. One walked over leather bindings. Calf-skin backs, with gilded lines and corners, red edges, speckled edges, yellow, blue and red backs, many of them half torn off, lay about in heaps. Big dog-eared folios yawned in every corner, and the boards dropped to pieces beneath the shrivelling leather. A thick layer of dust slowly buried this mass of literature and science.

The walls had once been whitewashed. Bare, so far as the upper half was concerned, they were scribbled over to the height of a man's head, in small text hand, half in Greek half in French. It was the commentary on the Phædo, which Branchut had been inspired to write one sleepless night. The

door was covered with inscriptions, traced by various people.

The topmost one, cut with a knife in capital letters, said:

"Woman is more bitter than death."

The second, in round hand, in crayon, ran:

"Academicians are all bourgeois, Cabanel is a hairdresser's assistant."

The third in pencil, in a cursive hand, said:

"Laud we the womanly form, which still, as of old, uplifts
Chants hieratic, in praise of the greatest of beauty's gifts." [1]

PAUL DION.

The fourth, written in chalk, in an illiterate hand, said:

"I have brought back the clean linen. Monday I will call for the dirty at the porter's lodge."

The fifth in charcoal, by Labanne himself, said:

"Athens, ever venerable city, if thou hadst not existed, the world would not yet know the meaning of beauty."

The sixth, inscribed with a hair-pin, which had faintly scratched the paint, declared:

[1] "Gloire aux corps féminins qui, sur le mode antique,
Chantent l'hymne sacré de la beauté plastique."

"Labanne is a rat. I don't care a damn for him.—MARIA."

And there were many others on the door.

In a corner near the stove a horse-blanket was flung on a pile of books and papers. These papers, these books, and this horse-blanket formed the bed of the moralist Branchut.

One day when he was sitting on his horse-blanket dreaming about Demosthenes, German professors, and the Princess Fédora, Remi was copying a watering-pot and putting his tongue out in the excess of his preoccupation. Wanting to change a line in his drawing, he asked the philosopher if he had any stale bread-crumb in his pocket, and inadvertently addressed him as Monsieur Branchut-du-Tic. Branchut, whom misfortune had made irascible, looked at him with eyes goggling like a lobster, a formidable shiver ran down his nose, and he left the studio in a rage.

The poet Dion, whom he found at the tavern, and Labanne, whom he discovered in front of a box of old books on the quay, took the matter in hand. The poet Dion declared that blood alone could wipe out the insult, but the sceptic Labanne was more humane, and brought about a sort of reconciliation. Remi bore no malice.

The moralist and the creole lived in peace for a month or two; till Branchut, whose fate it was

to suffer through women, had the misfortune to look tenderly at the hostess of "The Famished Cat." Now Branchut's face, when he wished to express tenderness, was terribly like the face of an epileptic. He ogled Virginie with bloodshot eyes starting from their orbits; she was terrified, and made a great fuss about her fright. She took every occasion to show the philosopher that he inspired her with virtuous horror; and as at the same time she cast languishing looks at Remi, Branchut suffered all the pangs of jealousy. He was unhappy, and became spiteful.

First of all he found fault with the gentle Labanne, who had doubly wronged him, inasmuch as he was possessed of a small private income, and had rendered the philosopher many services.

Solemnly every morning Branchut would return him the key of the studio, and every morning the sculptor quietly put it under the mat, where every evening Branchut would come and find it.

During the months of July and August Branchut became bitter, sceptical, and strong-minded. He posed as the superior man. He despised women, and said they were inferior beings. He affected not to look at Virginie, when he haughtily demanded bottles of beer from her, for which Labanne paid.

He put forth transcendental theories on art.

"I saw recently in a museum," he said, "the

figure of a mammoth traced with a bit of pointed flint on a piece of fossil ivory. This figure dates from a prehistoric period—it predates the oldest of civilisations. It is the work of a stupid savage. But it reveals an artistic sentiment far superior to the most beautiful conceptions of Michael Angelo: it is at once ideal and true. And our best modern artists sacrifice truth to the ideal, or the ideal to truth."

Here he looked maliciously at Labanne, but the latter was quite happy; he approved and even enlarged on his philosopher friend's idea.

"Art," he said, "declines in proportion as thought develops. There were no sculptors left in Greece at the time of Aristotle. Artists are inferior creatures; they are like pregnant women—they bring forth they know not how. Praxiteles produced his Venus as the mother of Aspasia produced Aspasia—quite naturally and quite foolishly. The sculptors of Athens and Rome had not read the Abbé Winckelmann. They knew nothing of æsthetics, yet they made the Theseus of the Parthenon and the Augustus of the Louvre. A clever man produces nothing beautiful or great."

Branchut asked sourly:

"Then in that case why are you a sculptor—you who think you are a clever man? It is true that I have never seen anything of yours which resembled

the least bit in the world a statue, a bust, or a bas-relief. You haven't even a clay model or a sketch to show, and it is certainly five years since you touched a chisel. If you keep your studio simply as a refuge for me, I owe it to you and I owe it to myself to tell you that I should not have the slightest trouble in finding another lodging. I have not given you, that I know of, the right to crush me with your charity."

But in spite of the greatness of his soul the philosopher could not remain long on these heights; he became weak once more. He forgot the mammoth in the museum, and could see none but Virginie. He fell into a deadly depression; yet he had a brief, bright hour in his life. He met Virginie one morning coming back from market, a basket on each arm, sweating, puffing, coughing, and choking with incipient asthma. He followed her, rather reluctantly, and she allowed him to carry the basket of meat. He was delighted, but his joy was the cause of his downfall. He hoped and dared everything. One evening he slipped into the kitchen and seized her in his arms as she was washing the dishes. She dropped a plate and emitted heartrending cries; the Princess Fédora did not shriek so shrilly. This raised a great scandal. The poet Dion was pleased; Mercier's eyes twinkled behind his glasses; Labanne shrugged his shoulders.

Remi was a little vexed, but he smiled to himself when he hit on a scheme for revenge.

It was the vengeance of a schoolboy and a savage, and he licked his lips at the thought of it. He let it sleep in his greedy lazy heart, like a pot of jam in a good housekeeper's store-closet.

The poet Dion was again talking about starting a review. The attempt of the previous year had failed because his grandmother's three hundred francs had to be wasted in domestic expenses; but he had received another present of the same sum.

"We must find a title," he said.

For two hours they discussed any number of possible and impossible appellations.

The next day Dion saluted the assembly at "The Famished Cat" with a triumphant cry:

"I've got it: *The Idea. The Idea: A new Review.*"

And with his head on one side, his Apollo-like locks thrown back, his face illuminated by a smile, he turned over the pages of an imaginary magazine and read out, as it were in capital letters: "*The Idea: A new Review.* Paul Dion, editor."

"What idea?" asked Labanne, stroking his yellow beard.

"The idea of the mathematical basis, of course," replied Mercier.

"The idea of the superiority of poetry and ideality over prose and reality," replied Dion.

"And also, perhaps," insinuated the moralist Branchut in bitter-sweet tones, rubbing his flexible nose, "and also, perhaps, the idea of the new morality of which I propose to expound the theory, that is of course if it is agreeable to you."

Labanne remarked that the thing had better be called *The Ideas,* and not *The Idea,* as each one seemed to have his own.

But the first title was adhered to, and Dion wrote out on a sheet of notepaper, with the pen Virginie used for her accounts, a summary of the first number, which was to contain:

1. "An Address to the Reader," by Paul Dion.

2. "An article, as yet vague, on philosophy," by Claude Branchut.

3. "An article, still more vague, on the fine arts," by Émile Labanne.

4. "The Mistress who brings Death—a Poem," by Paul Dion.

5. "Something very vague on science," by Guillaume Mercier.

As to theatrical and literary criticisms, the editor would look after them.

The matter thus decided on, Dion discovered, in a badly-paved street near Saint-André des Arts, a printer in distress, who with dull indifference

consented to print the magazine. He was a little, pale, bald man, whose melting-away aspect made one think of a candle-end burning in a draught. His affairs were in a pitiful condition. He was a hopeless printer, but he was a printer. He printed. He sent proofs which Dion befouled on all the tables in the café. But they were obliged to admit that copy was lacking, in spite of sundry poems sent from divers parts of Europe to the editor in chief of *The Idea.*

The first number seemed likely to be the more slender, since Branchut lost the pages of his article on philosophy in the various doorways as fast as he wrote them, and Labanne could not compose the first lines of his studies on art until he had read fifteen hundred volumes. Mercier's article did really exist; but the author, who was as cramped in his writing, in his style, and in his ideas, as he was in his clothes, could easily have put the whole thing on the two glasses of his spectacles. As for "The Mistress who brings Death," she was already in her third proof.

It was at this moment that Sainte-Lucie, appointed Secretary to the Staff, proposed to introduce Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse to the poet; he could not help but give them an article, he said.

It was a great occasion the night on which Godet-Laterrasse climbed down from the outside of an

omnibus and entered Virginie's establishment. He turned the door-handle with the air of a man who knows himself in demand, and while his entrance was received with a flattering murmur, he crossed the shop with African majesty, tempered by creole languor. When he heard himself hailed as "dear master" by the poet Dion, he showed every tooth in his head, and smiled like an idol. But all of a sudden his face assumed an expression of haughty dislike. He had met Labanne's indifferent glance through the tobacco smoke. He had heard that Labanne had declared that he was going to represent him in an heroic attitude, with the dial of a clock in his waistcoat. Since then he considered him to be the most corrupt of sceptics. Filled with this thought, he turned his horizontal face towards Dion and Mercier, and said:

"Young men, beware of scepticism; it is a poisonous breath which dries up the soul in its flower."

He promised to contribute to the magazine an unpublished chapter of his great work on the regeneration of humanity by the black races.

He explained his theory. The black races were untouched by the Christian leprosy, which for eighteen centuries had devoured the white peoples.

He told how, when he was but eleven years old, he was walking alone by the sea, and, looking at

its immensity, he said to himself: "Priests can say what they like; I will never believe that Christianity has done anything for the abolition of slavery."

When he left, they escorted him to the omnibus. As it approached Sainte-Lucie hailed it. Godet-Laterrasse, having shaken hands all round, took his pupil affectionately by the shoulders, and, drawing him a little to one side, said:

"I have forgotten my purse; it is most careless of me! Lend me a few sous."

Then, having adroitly picked up a franc from the handful of change held out to him, he climbed on to the vehicle and called out:

"Go ahead, Remi! Dig into Tacitus!"

CHAPTER VI

IT was quite natural that Remi should be plucked when he went up for his examination the second time. His prospects of a degree were becoming more and more misty and effaced. When Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse commented on his failures, which were certainly not surprising, he managed to make them appear mysterious and questionable.

"It is not you who have been plucked," he said; "it is I. They were aiming at me when they hit you, you may be sure. Ah! these gentlemen of the Sorbonne won't forgive me my last article."

When Remi heard remarks of this kind, he felt so completely knocked over that he did not exactly know if the baccalaureate was a literary examination or a secret society.

He passed the winter in a voluptuous torpor, and when the timid April sun shone on the walls it only half-awakened him.

The sparrows were twittering on the roofs. The half-pay captain was sowing seeds in his green boxes. Windows, which had been closed for so long, their panes obscured by thick steam, now opened to the

pale daylight and the first warm breath of spring. Remi, who had since the summer lost sight and recollection of his friends on the fourth storey, was pleased to see the cage full of canaries and the brass handle of the piano again.

When he caught sight, for the first time, of the mother and daughter in the gilt salon, he almost bowed in a friendly way to them.

A little old man was sitting on the sofa holding his hat and his umbrella between his knees; he seemed to be talking to them in an intimate fashion. He raised his arm, and Remi imagined that he was saying:

"How you have grown, Marie (or Jeanne, or Louise)! Why, you are quite a young lady!"

Remi felt a little cross at seeing a stranger seated in this fashion on his friend's sofa—not that the little old man was unpleasant looking; on the contrary, he had the air of a good fellow. But Remi did not know him, and the thought that the ladies had secrets from him made him unhappy. One cannot foresee everything. He shut his window, and sulked till the next day. He opened it in the morning just to see if the canaries' cage was in its usual place, and saw the young girl, in a round hat, chewing the top of her umbrella and prancing with the impatience of a young horse —a habit of hers when she was ready to go out,

and had to wait while her mother loitered, tying her bonnet-strings in front of the glass. But one must admit that a woman of forty-five can't dress as a little girl can in two or three birdlike darts.

The mother that day, as every day, inspected her daughter's toilet minutely. But there must have been something seriously wrong with the grey frock, for she said something which was received with all sorts of little impatient pouting movements with stamping and marks of despair. Finally, Mademoiselle undid the buttons of her corsage and pushed-to the window, which in a few seconds opened again of its own accord, so that Remi caught a glimpse of the mother standing up with the grey frock in her hand; she was putting a stitch in it, while Mademoiselle, clad in her stays and a short white petticoat, stood waiting.

She turned her head, and saw the student looking at her; then, with the pretty gesture of a child who is being bathed and is chilly, she covered her chest with her two arms. Her lips pronounced some words very rapidly, which were surely:

"Mamma—mamma."

The mother shrugged her shoulders, and seemed to answer quite calmly:

"Good Lord, my dear! What does it matter?" Then she closed the window nonchalantly.

From that day Remi refrained, though he could

not have said why, from observing his opposite neighbours too closely; but he thought they might go away, and he would never see them again, and the thought made him sad. He decided that the degree, as understood by Godet-Laterrasse, was not a very important matter, and he resolved to be a painter. To paint seemed to him at once fine and simple. Then suddenly he remembered General Télémaque.

"I must go and see him," he said.

CHAPTER VII

FTER his second failure, Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, who was much taken up with public affairs, neglected his pupil considerably. Remi consoled himself for the absence of his tutor by drawing in Labanne's studio. The incomparable sculptor had recently discovered the works of the poet Colardeau in a box on the parapet of the Quai Malaquais, and was carried away with admiration for them.

"Colardeau is the greatest of all French poets," he said.

A heavy heat hung over the city of stone and asphalt, but the moralist Branchut was clothed in a thick overcoat of cloth with a long pile, which, one of his friends said, made him look like a scythe covered with goat's skin. His thoughts dwelt perpetually on woman, and he had never been in such a ferocious humour. He no longer had the appetite with which he had formerly eaten a ha'penny roll every day, but an inextinguishable thirst burnt him under his thick fleece. One day when Remi, under Labanne's direction, was copying for the hundredth time the water-jar, which stood in the winter on the

studio stove, the moralist Branchut seized the model vase and went off to fill it at the pump. When he returned, with a wet nose and a dripping beard, the young creole cast a sidelong glance, full of meaning, at him. Branchut called for lightning from heaven, and longed for the deluge. He wrote obscure and terrible sentiments on leaves which he tore from Labanne's most valuable books. A storm freshened the atmosphere of the city and relieved the moralist's over-strained nerves.

Time went by, the passing seasons brought kites in the windy September skies, fogs on the October horizon, hot chestnuts at the doors of the wine shops, oranges on the barrows, the magic-lantern on the Savoyard's back; and when the roofs were covered with snow, the savoury smell of roasted goose in warm dining-rooms, on feast days, such as Christmas, New Year, and Twelfth Night. But time did not change Branchut's heart.

Towards four o'clock on the afternoon of Twelfth Night, Remi was crossing the place Saint-Sulpice with the poet Dion; he looked at the icicles which hung from the four stone bishops and half hid them, and at the frozen water in the fountain under their feet. He rubbed his hands together, and laughed aloud.

"It won't be very warm on this Place at midnight," he said.

Then they began to discuss—Remi with childish joy, and Dion with more refined satisfaction—a letter they had just sent off by a commissionaire, the opening phrases of which they repeated to one another untiringly:

"You are dark and I am fair. You are strong and I am weak. I understand you, and I love you."

They had evidently concocted some detestable practical joke, with which they felt pleased and proud.

That evening Branchut dined at "The Famished Cat" with Mercier, who was beginning to look old, and whose shrunken face was almost hidden by his spectacles, with Labanne, who had been much taken up for a week past with a seventeenth-century book on etiquette, the poet Dion, and Sainte-Lucie. Virginie gave them a cabbage soup of powerful bouquet. Branchut pushed away the smoking plateful Labanne offered him. Such heavy food choked him, he said. Labanne had not the slightest idea how to feed one of the *élite*.

A commissionaire came in, asked for Monsieur Branchut, and handed him a violet-scented letter in a pearl-grey envelope with a blue monogram. As the philosopher read it, his sensitive nose twitched violently. At last he put it in his pocket (he was wearing a dress-coat Labanne had given him), and looked around mysteriously. All his

thin and acrid blood rushed to his pimpled face; he was transfigured. His nose seemed illuminated by an interior flame. Dion was examining the hem of his table-napkin; Remi, with his knife in the salt-cellar, was making hills and valleys with the salt, and seemed entirely lost in the contemplation of the little polar landscapes he was creating, and destroying with the all-powerful capriciousness of a Lapland Jehovah.

The conversation which the commissionaire had interrupted was quietly resumed, Labanne alone talking with any energy. Much interested in the etiquette of polite manners in the seventeenth century, he was regretting the days of Louis XIV., and said:

"The Great King was certainly not to be compared with Cæsar Borgia, but anyway he was better than the rights of man and immortal principles!"

Every now and then Branchut slipped his hand into the pocket of his coat and pressed something to his heart. He was lost in a profound reverie, and from his swollen and cracked lips there escaped at intervals suave words alluding to the possible regeneration of mankind by love. At eleven o'clock he rose to go out; first brushing his waistcoat with his cuff, which showed for him extraordinary refinement and unwonted attention to his personal appearance.

"See you to-morrow?" asked Labanne. The philosopher muttered mysteriously something about the probability of his total disappearance, and departed as quietly and swiftly as if he had wings. Shortly after, Dion and Labanne left "The Famished Cat."

At midnight the moralist, in his dress-coat, was still walking round and round the fountain with its four bishops. The few belated passers-by went quickly across the square. The water which had overflowed from the basin of the fountain froze on the asphalt, and Branchut slipped at every step. A bitter wind blew through the tails of his coat; but like a blind horse turning a mill wheel, he turned and turned about the stone fountain indefatigably. The town-hall clock struck one and still the moralist revolved; the silence of the night was broken only by the monotonous tread of two policemen on their beat. At half-past one he drew out the scented note and read it over by the light of a street lamp.

"You are dark and I am fair. You are strong and I am weak. I understand you, and I love you. Come to-night at twelve o'clock to the fountain on the Place Saint-Sulpice."

There could be no mistaking that, so the philosopher returned to his post. The hoar-frost covered him with a glittering powder; the tails of his

coat hung heavy with moisture. The square was deserted. Still he waited. Deceived, disappointed, overcome, he dropped on to a bench and sat there motionless, his head in his hands. When at last he looked up, he thought he caught sight of Dion and Sainte-Lucie disappearing swiftly in the obscurity of the Rue Honoré-Chevalier. A sudden light burst in upon him; his nose trembled with indignation.

He swore to Labanne next day, as he lay draped in his horse-blanket, that he would kill Sainte-Lucie.

"I don't care much for my life," he said, "but I care still less for his."

Labanne tried in vain to pacify him.

At the same time Remi was quietly and obliviously enjoying the warmth of his eider-down quilt, thinking to himself the while:

"I really must go and see General Télémaque one of these days."

CHAPTER VIII

TÉLÉMAQUE, a linen cap on his head, a white apron round his waist, stood smiling on the threshold of his shop. The dusty avenue, with its meagre plane trees, was inundated by the bright morning sunshine. To the right the view extended as far as the barracks, from whence came a sound of trumpets; to the left, to the round, open space where the Emperor's statue should have been, but where there was only an empty pedestal. On either side of the wide avenue were low houses and bits of waste ground, with washerwomen's clothes-poles in rows. The wine shops at the street corners overlooking these bare patches were painted a brown-red, to attract the eye, and provoke the thirst of soldiers and workmen, even from a distance. All the rest, walls and waste ground alike, were a uniform grey. The two houses opposite to that occupied by Télémaque had plaster façades and were three storeys high. They were ornamented with balustrades, semicircular bow-windows, and niches containing busts —all cracking, peeling, mouldy, their broken windows patched with paper and hung with rags.

Groups of children and dogs played in confused heaps in the dust, soldiers were walking slowly towards the river-bank, and straight-petticoated women came and went, carrying pails and baskets.

Télémaque's shop was painted red; in the window were to be seen a sirloin of beef and some steaks laid out on plates. Télémaque was swinging a dead rabbit by the ears and smiling. The lustrous enamel of his eyes subdued yet at the same time set off by his plump cheeks, illuminated his ebony face, with its flat nose and thick lips. His wool was still black and curly, but his forehead, which had yielded to a rectilinear baldness, rose as it receded, disclosing a portion of the skull of which the summit formed a sort of crest.

Miragoane, sitting on her haunches, looked with equal interest at men, animals, and things. Free from disturbing passions, her mind at ease, she warmed herself quietly in the sun. Sometimes she would stretch up her intelligent head and with curled-up tongue lick a little of the coagulated blood on the muzzle of the rabbit as it hung from Télémaque's hands; then, satisfied with this delicate piece of sensuality, she would look down the avenue again, and softly stir her tail.

Télémaque turned the skin of the rabbit inside out as easily as one turns a glove, then putting the skinless animal, glowing with the most brilliant

hues, upon a small table, he adroitly cut it up and put the pieces in a dish. Then he went into the shop, the outer door of which opened on to a little garden in which were several arbours. Having prepared his stew in the cleanest way, he sat down and dreamily watched the copper saucepan singing on the stove. His eyes, which were like the freshly-painted eyes on a new doll, stared vacantly; but no doubt they saw more than the tiled stove, the pewter counter, and the tables covered with American cloth, for he was murmuring to himself a strange, low chant, and talking to invisible beings. Then, having taken another look at the stew, which, as the cooks say, had started on a slow fire:

"Miragoane," he said, "keep the shop."

Miragoane turned an intelligent eye on him, and came forward as far as the doorstep, where she sat down with an important air. Télémaque went upstairs to a nice bedroom hung with a pictured paper on which a boar-hunt was indefinitely repeated. This room was furnished with a walnut wardrobe, a bed with white cotton hangings, and four tables, and served as the landlord's bedroom and as a dining-room for private parties on Sundays. Télémaque took a box out of the cupboard, and laying it on the table, opened it with much care. It was full of things wrapped in paper and silk handkerchiefs. He took out first a red shawl, then a pair of

beaded epaulettes, some earrings, a cross, a regular plaster of obscure orders, and a big hat trimmed with braid and big gold tassels at each of its two points. When these treasures were spread on the table, he contemplated them with the astonished look of a child; he put the hat with its dangling tassels on his woolly head, wrapped himself in the red shawl, which had belonged to his wife Olivette, and looked at himself in his small shaving mirror.

He was living his past life over again, and had gone back to the time when he was a general. He saw the dazzling coronation ceremony of His Majesty Faustin I., the blue mantles of the dukes, princes and counts, the red coats of the barons; the black face of the Emperor with his golden crown; Olivette, who had come all in her court-dress, in a wheelbarrow, to take her place with the other ladies in the church.

Everything came back to him, the multi-coloured garments, the salutes of the cannon, the military, music, the cries of "Vive l'Empereur." His imagination pictured the sumptuous entertainments of the imperial palace, where, beneath the candles and the crystal chandeliers, the ladies of the court danced, till in the furious excitement of waltzing their magnificent black bosoms burst through their white muslin bodices. He saw again his soldiers,

drawn up for inspection on the arid and sunburnt plain. Ranked in order of battle they all presented arms to him, while he himself, Télémaque, with his hands behind his back, like Napoleon in the pictures, went up and down the ranks, and said:

"Soldiers, I am very pleased with you."

Then his imagination presented more sombre pictures. He saw the events which had brought about his fall.

Soulouque, the Emperor, combined with his power as a sovereign the genius of a crafty and cruel child. In December 1851 he determined to make war on the Republic of San Domingo, and General Télémaque, at the head of his brigade, formed part of the expeditionary corps commanded by General Voltaire Castor, Comte de l'Ile-à-Vache. In his proclamation to the army the Emperor said: "Officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers! The men of the East, the cattle graziers of San Domingo, will fly before you. Forward!"

Full of confidence in his Emperor's word, General Télémaque marched proudly at the head of the black regiments which formed the vanguard—his tasselled hat on his head, and on his breast the imperial and military Order of Saint Faustin, as well as the grand cordon of the Haïtian Legion of Honour. His uniform was heavily braided with

gold, but his feet were bare. All of a sudden a vigorous rattle of musketry surprised him on the border of a plantation of bananas. Astonished, indignant, frightened, he turned his troubled face to his troops, and cried with sincere eloquence:

"Emperor made fun of poor people!"

At the general's words the brigade turned on its heels and ran off as fast as it could. Télémaque headed the flying column, putting into play the muscles of his monkey-like legs, and hanging out his tongue. He didn't give one thought to the guns, the tents, the packets of cartridges, and the cases of biscuit abandoned by the roadside. When Soulouque heard of this military achievement, he trembled in every limb. He had General Voltaire Castor shot by way of raising his spirits somewhat, and he ordered General Télémaque to be arrested; but the latter hid for a week in the bush, till the French consul, at the request of the beautiful Madame Sainte-Lucie, gave him shelter and smuggled him aboard the *Naïade*, just then sailing for Marseilles.

When Télémaque reached this point in his souvenirs, he took on the air of an intelligent dog who has been whipped, and hastily put the cross, the epaulettes, and the cocked-hat back in their wrappings. He looked uneasily out of the window for fear some one should have seen them from the

avenue, and having replaced the precious box in the wardrobe and locked it up, he went downstairs again into the shop and poured a few drops of water into the savoury, simmering stew.

The hands of the clock which hung above the counter pointed to eleven, and a crowd of little urchins, with mops of hair in disorder and their shirts hanging out of their ragged breeches, came galloping up to the glass door in a cloud of dust. Télémaque appeared on the threshold bearing a soup-tureen full of bits of chicken and cold fried fish, all cleanly wrapped in pieces of newspaper. Miragoane gravely and attentively superintended the distribution from the doorstep agitating her tail the while.

The little folks, tumbling over each other, pressed round the negro, who in a stern nasal voice gave the order:

"Right-about face."

The children fell into line, hands down, chins up, casting longing looks at the soup-tureen.

Télémaque inspected them for some time with a serious pleasure.

"Answer to the roll," he said. "Number one, number two, number three," and handed to each one, his ration. Numbers one, two, and three scampered off, with both hands hugging their portion of the titbits to their chests, and then wolfing

it in a corner while they cast distrustful glances in all directions.

"Numbers four, five, six."

Number six, who had red hair, knocked down number four, who was lame, and sent his chicken bone rolling into the gutter.

Miragoane cocked her ear, Number four picked up his bone, and General Télémaque, having thus provided for his army, returned to his cooking. Perceiving that the stew was all right, he took a little wooden gun, painted red, from a drawer and called Miragoane. She came up slowly, with drooping ears and a look which meant, "Good Lord! what is the use of all this! Why complicate life needlessly. It does not give me the slightest pleasure to be drilled. But I consent to do it just to be agreeable to my master—Télémaque."

The dog stood on her hind legs, and hugged the wooden gun against her pink belly.

"Carry arms! Present arms!"

She obeyed the word of command till her legs grew tired, then she dropped on all fours again, and leaving her weapon on the tiles she gave herself a shake and went back to her place on the doorstep.

"Not well done—careless," said Télémaque. "We must begin all over again to-morrow."

But Miragoane, motionless and rigid, barked

twice. Then she began to run from the doorstep to the stove, making her claws rattle on the tiles. Remi, wearing a bell-shaped straw hat of the kind used by boating-men, walked into the shop and proceeded to make himself known to Télémaque, who was too delighted to say a word. He turned his back and began to uncork a bottle of white wine.

"That you, Massa Remi?" he said at last. "Massa Remi, son of Massa Minister, godson of my poor wife Olivette, who sold arrack, cocoanuts, and sapotillas at Port-au-Prince. Black men kill her wickedly in her shop, and drink her rum. It was printed in big letters in *Haïti Monitor*. Massa Morel-Latasse, the consul, read it to me. I was sad for Olivette, good woman. How please I am to see you, Massa Remi. Olivette not young when I marry her. They laugh at Télémaque for marrying old woman; but he know the more old a woman am, more good she cooks. Sit down, Massa Remi; dis white wine neber grow no older, 'cause we're going drink it," and he laughed long and loudly at his joke. When he had uncorked the bottle, blown away the wax round the mouth and filled the glasses, he became thoughtful and said:

"Life not last always, but death last always."

Then leaning forward he put his thick lips close to Sainte-Lucie's ear and whispered:

"I've got nice little lot of money upstairs, in a bag, to make a fine tombstone for Olivette."

After this he grew more cheerful, asked after Madame Sainte-Lucie, who was a fine woman, he said, and wanted to know what Remi was doing in Paris.

"I am studying for my degree," answered the young man with a yawn.

Télémaque did not know what a degree meant, but he supposed it was something good. He half closed his fawning eyes as he clinked glasses. Then he asked if Remi would not be a general some day.

"It's fine," he said, with a sigh, "it's fine to be a general, but it has its drawbacks."

"You were a general yourself once, Télémaque," said Remi, who found the negro amusing; "it was under that wicked ape of a Soulouque, wasn't it?"

Télémaque looked uneasy. His thick lips trembled.

"Massa Remi, you mustn't speak like dat of the Emperor," he stuttered.

Remi had heard his father say that the general was horribly afraid of Soulouque, whom he imagined to be still alive. So he added:

"Do you think his ghost will come in the night and drag you out of bed? He has been dead these last ten years."

The negro shook his head slowly.

"No, Massa Remi," he said.

It was no use Remi saying every one knew that Soulouque died in Jamaica in 1867. The negro replied:

"No, Massa Remi, the Emperor not dead, he in hiding," and Télémaque's forehead puckered over its hard skull.

From the copper saucepan came a pleasing odour of meat and spices. Télémaque sniffed it and grew cheerful again.

"Now we'll breakfast, Massa Remi," he said with a laugh.

He laid the cloth in an arbour hung with virginia creeper; his little garden looked over fields of lettuces. The banks of the railway to Versailles barred the horizon. Remi was gazing abstractedly at this meagre country, when the negro reappeared grinning from ear to ear above the smoking dish he carried in both hands.

"It something very good, Massa Remi," he said.

Miragoane, put in charge of the shop while they ate, which they did with a good appetite, turned at intervals towards the table with a resigned expression. When they had finished the rabbit, washed down with Argenteuil wine, they lingered lovingly over an excellent Brie cheese and new bread.

"You are very comfortable here, Télémaque," said Remi, who was himself perfectly happy.

Télémaque sighed deeply, for human nature is never satisfied.

"Do you know what is wanting in my restaurant, Massa Remi? my portrait in a gilt frame. It would look so well over the counter. As I told you, I have nice sum of money upstairs in a bag, for my poor Olivette's tombstone; but I would give a fair slice of it to the painter who did my portrait."

Sainte-Lucie assured the general he should have his portrait, without touching the money meant for his godmother's mausoleum.

"I am a painter," he said to the astonished Télémaque; "next time I come I will bring my box of colours and a canvas and make a portrait of you."

Miragoane announced the arrival of two customers, soldiers who wanted cans of beer. While Télémaque disappeared through the trap-door which shut in the stair to the cellar, Remi, whose pipe had gone out, went to the counter for a match, when who should he see going down the avenue but the little old gentleman he had caught sight of in the gilt drawing-room of the ladies in the Rue des Feuillantines, the same little old gentleman with the same white whiskers and the same umbrella.

"Télémaque, come here, quick, quick!" he cried.

The trap-door was raised, and Télémaque appeared like a subterranean but kindly genius. He laughed from the midst of the bottles of beer which he would have immediately proceeded to uncork and serve to the two waiting soldiers. But Remi caught him by his white jacket and led him, puzzled, to the threshold of the shop.

"Télémaque, do you know that old gentleman?" he asked, pointing a finger at the bent back of the worthy man.

The negro, hugging the two bottles against his chest, answered with a great peal of laughter:

"Why of course, Massa Remi; he my landlord, his name Massa Sarriette. I going to ask him to do some repair in my attic."

"Télémaque, you mustn't ask that old man to do any repairs," said Remi; adding in a severe voice:

"Do you pay your rent regularly, Télémaque?"

Was it to be supposed that a restaurant-keeper could live in the same house for twenty-one years and not pay his rent?

Remi then learnt that Monsieur Sarriette was considered a rich man, that he lived most of the time in Normandy, where he had property, and was always measuring public monuments with his umbrella.

The enthusiastic youth exclaimed:

"Télémaque, I will paint your portrait. I will paint you in your general's uniform, with a red feather in your hat and four epaulettes."

"That would be beautiful, Massa Remi," said the black man with a grave and contrite air; "but you mustn't do it, because it would vex the Emperor who is in hiding. You can paint me in black dress clothes with three diamond studs in my shirt."

Remi, who never indulged in reflections of any kind, and was never surprised whatever happened around and about him, caught himself wondering, as he walked down the Avenue Saint Germain, why he had been so excited when he saw the old friend of the ladies in the Rue des Feuillantines go by.

CHAPTER IX

AVING meditated profoundly on the pearl-grey letter on Twelfth Night, and the rendezvous at the fountain, Branchut the moralist finished by building up an ideal conception of these mysterious events. He no longer thirsted for Sainte-Lucie's blood; in his opinion the creole had nothing whatever to do with the matter.

The philosopher arrived, by the help of his inner consciousness alone, at a knowledge of the truth about his adventure. Filled with contempt for the assertions of Remi, who openly acknowledged himself to be the author of the pearl-grey letter, Branchut was convinced with all the certainty of intuition that it was written by an exquisite and unhappy woman of a rare nature and exceptional conditions.

By a series of inductions such as only the brain of a metaphysician could be capable of, the moralist proved to himself by the clearest evidence that this woman was a Danish princess, that her name was Vranga, and that after having attired herself for the appointment at the fountain of the four bishops

with ornaments of the most strangely poetical and melancholy character, she had fallen dead in her boudoir, surrounded by tropical plants, whose perfume, symbolical of her love for Branchut, was at once delicious and mortal.

As these sad and elegant facts were revealed to him, one by one, by dint of subjective enquiry and internal cogitation, he communicated them to his friend Labanne, who found nothing surprising in them. His successive discoveries on the subject of the Princess Vranga, however, had the effect of plunging Branchut into a state of melancholy eloquence.

"I must expiate by the most refined tortures," he said, "the incomparable crime of having caused the death of this unparalleled creature, who was nervous as a racehorse, and learned as Hypatia."

Grievous twitchings affected all the nerves of his expressive nose. Vranga became his one idea; he lived only in her memory. In his despair he forgot to borrow any clothes from Labanne, and in his melancholy detachment wandered about the Boulevard Saint-Michel draped in his horse-blanket as in a shroud.

"You see," he would say to his friends when they stopped to speak to him, "I am in mourning." And he would point to his head, on which was something that had a vague resemblance to crape,

twisted round something that had a vague resemblance to a hat.

While he thus wore mourning for the Princess Vranga, Remi was becoming colder and colder towards the hostess of "The Famished Cat." He never ventured alone to the establishment, and would not even leave his companions to get a match from the table by the sink, where Virginie eternally rinsed glasses.

He was growing serious and painting zealously. There was another fellow now in Labanne's studio, a real hard worker, a muscular fellow as strong as a horse, who with sleeves turned up, and open shirt front showing his hairy chest, painted all day without saying a word. His peasant's face, deeply lined and coloured like the earth, garnished with a bristly beard, expressed no sentiment of any kind; his round eyes observed everything, but never gave a clue to his own thoughts. It was Potrel—Potrel of whose ingratitude Virginie was never tired of speaking. He had returned from Fontainebleau, where he had been painting for two years, and Labanne lent him a corner of his studio until the one he had taken at Montmartre should be vacant. Potrel spoke little, and badly: bending over his easel, his palette on his thumb, his eyes half shut, he would reply to all Labanne's wild theories the one word "Possibly," which he articulated as he

revived with an indrawn breath the expiring ashes in the blackened bowl of his pipe. One day Labanne said to him:

"The absolute is unrealisable; no artist can express absolute beauty."

"Possibly," answered Potrel, and went on painting. He hired a model, an admirable little Italian, snivelling and cunning, who stole his tobacco, so Sainte-Lucie could now try his hand at "academies."

When Potrel got off his stool to stretch his legs, he would give Remi a few brief but clear words of advice and resume his work.

One morning, when he was scratching his beard and biting his nails, Remi asked him how it was he was not working. Potrel pointed with his hand in the direction of the skylight, and said:

"That cursed gewgaw there prevents my painting."

The "cursed gewgaw" was no other than the sun, just then filling the studio with blinding light.

Potrel had a huge appetite which he satisfied in cabmen's restaurants. When Remi spoke to him of "The Famished Cat," he would simply smile. One day, however, he asked if Virginie had kept her fine figure. After many vain attempts Remi succeeded in enticing him one evening to the establishment in the Rue Saint-Jacques. Virginie, red as a peony, brought him a large slice of ham.

"Eat it, Monsieur Potrel," she said. "It is very good, very delicate. See how white the fat is. You are not drinking anything. Try this beer; I bottled it last month. You used to be fond of beer."

And Potrel ate and drank, while Virginie, standing behind his chair, her face illuminated with a seraphic smile, gasped ecstatically at every mouthful the silent and robust man swallowed.

The hostess did not even notice when Remi left the tavern, and he gave a sigh of relief, like a man who has been eased from an oppressive weight.

On his way home he met the concierge of the house where the two ladies lived going into the wine shop, and a little farther on he saw the man's wife gossiping with the greengrocer. Then an idea suddenly occurred to him. He walked into the deserted lodge, and looked about to see if he could discover the name of the ladies on the fourth storey. Above one of the little pigeon-holes were the words "Madame Lourmel, rentière."

Next day he saw from the window Mademoiselle Lourmel giving her birds water in a small china cup. He watched her involuntarily with a warm and lively sympathy. She saw him, but it was only slowly that she turned aside her frank ingenuous gaze. He noticed that she was no longer a child, and that she was very pretty.

He went at this period several times a week to Courbevoie, and the portrait of Télémaque emerged little by little from the canvas. It was a very bad portrait, but Télémaque was enchanted with it. When the shop was shut at night, he would prop the painting up on the table between two lighted candles, and dance the Calenda before it, or else sing to it in a soft nasal voice:

"Canga-do-ki-la,
Canga-li."

Miragoane, seated on her haunches, gravely took part in the ceremonies. One day she affectionately licked the nose of the portrait: the paint was wet, but the damage done was easily repaired.

Télémaque had moments of regret that Olivette was not on the canvas beside him, dressed in her red shawl. It did not deeply distress him, however, and he continued to dance the Calenda.

CHAPTER X

EMI got up one morning with the pleasant thought in his mind, that he had finished the negro's portrait, and that it was in its way a remarkable work. He could see, framed in the window opposite his, two little hands tapping on the keys of a piano; they were no longer red, and did not tap so hard. He also noticed that the chandelier was imprisoned in a muslin bag, and that there was a great deal of bustling about in the ordinarily calm apartment.

The little hands shut down the piano-lid and disappeared, to reappear carrying leather bags and hat-boxes. Remi, who felt that something of importance was happening, stuck to his post of observation, and kept his eye on the approaches to the house. After two hours' watching he saw the porter come down carrying a pyramid of trunks and boxes; a cab stopped at the door, and he saw Madame Lourmel's servant pile still more travelling bags and boxes in it. Remi seized his paint-box, emptied all the money he had in his secretary into his pocket, and rushed bare-headed, in a jersey

and his slippers, downstairs and into the street. He hailed the astonished driver of a passing cab and hurried him in pursuit of the vehicle which had just moved off under its tottering pyramid of luggage, and into which he had seen the skirts of a dress disappearing.

The two cabs crossed Paris, one behind the other, and drew up in the courtyard of the St. Lazare railway station. Remi followed the two ladies, and, still in his unconventional attire, climbed the stairs. Mademoiselle Lourmel turned her head to see this strange traveller, whom she recognised perfectly well. Her look showed a surprise which included amusement, and something of admiration. As he stood by Madame Lourmel at the ticket-office and heard her ask for two tickets for Avranches, he breathed a sigh of relief and also took a ticket for Avranches. Madame Lourmel went off with her daughter to register the luggage, and Remi, who had no formality of that kind to fulfil, decided to do a little useful shopping. He ran to a ready-made clothes-store in the Rue de la Pepinière, bought two or three suits without looking at them, and paid the shopkeeper, who had half a mind to have his extraordinary customer arrested. Suddenly Remi gave a cry of despair:

"Shoes!" he said; "shoes!"

The shopkeeper, a handsome Jew with a goat-like head, an amiable mouth and pitiless eyes, replied coldly that "he didn't keep the article."

"Give me yours, then," said the desperate creole.

But the Israelite, who was becoming more and more uneasy, looked so forbidding that Remi went off in his slippers, putting on some of the new clothes as he went along through the bustle of the garish street. He stopped to snatch a hat hanging outside a shop, and flung down the money for it. It was twenty-seven minutes past four already. Remi tore along towards the station, and by thirty-two minutes past he was in the waiting-room, which had probably never before been entered by a traveller in slippers. A pair of violet eyes welcomed him as he entered and seemed to say:

"We were waiting for you. You are very extraordinary with your brown skin, your new clothes put on all awry, and your bedroom slippers. But we are not in the least afraid of you or annoyed at you; you don't look at all ill-tempered, and you have a bold air which is rather pleasing. This is all we have to say to you. If you want to know anything more you must ask mamma."

If the daughter's eyes talked after this fashion, Madame de Lourmel's glance betrayed that sort of uneasiness noticeable in a hen when one coaxes her chickens from her with bread crumbs.

Remi left mother and daughter discreetly alone in their carriage, and settled himself at the other end of the train. Having taken his seat, the first question he asked himself was when, where, and how could he get some shoes; then, on counting his money, he found he had twenty-one francs thirty-five centimes left, and felt quite reassured. His second question was, if by any chance he was in love with Mademoiselle Lourmel.

CHAPTER XI

BOUT a week after Remi's departure, Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse was seized with an ardent desire to see him. With a volume of Tacitus in his pocket, he went off to the Rue des Feuillantines, where he learnt that his pupil had disappeared.

A cloud crossed his noble brow, that brow which, if it had been a mirror, would only have reflected the sky, the gulls of the Pacific, and the constellations of the two hemispheres. People with superior minds are more given to presentiment than ordinary beings. Godet-Laterrasse had a presentiment. That is why, laying aside their old enmity, he went to see Labanne in his studio.

The sculptor, who had no idea of time or space, could tell him nothing. He took him to interview the opulent Virginie, who attributed Remi's flight to a secret sorrow, the nature of which she left unexplained; but she insinuated that she had not failed to anticipate this eventuality. If, as she feared, it was love which had driven Monsieur Sainte-Lucie to despair, she was truly grieved, but one could not please everybody, unless one was the sort of woman

which is unfortunately too numerous in these days. She had done nothing to make Monsieur Remi jealous of Monsieur Potrel; she was an honest woman and had nothing to reproach herself with. She appealed to the picture of "The Famished Cat" to bear witness to her innocence, and returned to the dark corner, where she spent most of her time washing glasses.

With a mind full of care, Godet-Laterrasse returned to the heights of Montmartre. He came down again next day on the top of an omnibus and revisited the studio, which he had chosen as his centre of operations. There he found Branchut, who, in his horse-blanket, was occupied in writing a treatise on love. Full of his subject, Branchut proceeded to expound it.

"Love," he said, "can only be absolute between two beings who have never seen each other. Eternal absence is necessary for two souls to be in perfect harmony. Solitude is the condition necessary to the growth of a definite passion."

Godet-Laterrasse resisted the temptations to an oratorical duel on these sublime heights, and asked the moralist if he had seen Sainte-Lucie.

Branchut was totally ignorant of the creole's disappearance, but a sudden intuition enabled him to explain it. In the twinkling of an eye many things were revealed to him. According to him, this dis-

appearance had a not remote connection with the death of the Princess Vranga. Sainte-Lucie's gloomy behaviour, in the circumstances that preceded and accompanied the lamentable and poetic end of the Princess Vranga, was due, in the moralist's eyes, to an eternal remorse that had taken possession of the soul of this young man, frivolous in appearance, but Machiavellian in reality.

"Princess Vranga had to die," said the philosopher serenely. "It was needful for her to die, so that the love she felt for me might be realised in the absolute. Sainte-Lucie's crime has probably led him to suicide; he intercepted, over and over again, the letters the Princess had written to me, the text of which I have reconstructed from intuition! and with satanic irony he gave me only the last one."

So said Branchut, whose nose twitched in his livid face touched with spots of colour, and whose eyes were haggard and bloodshot. Labanne arrived just in time to drag the unfortunate tutor out into the street, wildly shaking his umbrella above his head.

"My poor moralist!" said he, "he has never had finer ideas than he has now. A grain of phosphorus in the brain makes a man of genius; unhappily he has two grains, that's the misfortune!"

Labanne remembered having heard Sainte-Lucie speak enthusiastically of a black general who kept

a restaurant at Courbevoie; the sculptor thought he might know something. Any way, he would like to see the negro himself.

They got on top of a tram, which took them to the Place de l'Étoile, where Labanne instinctively stopped at the first café, and, having ordered sundry bottles of beer, lost himself in interminable chatter. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse answered him at great length, and though Labanne did not listen to him, he continued to talk. Many fine theories were aired. All of a sudden the sculptor made a gesture in the air with his thumb, and said:

"It would be quite possible to make that thing bearable to the eye."

"That thing" was the Arc de Triomphe.

"It would be simple, but you'll see no one will think of it. One need only establish a sufficient number of stalls at the foot of the edifice, and let them to cobblers, public letter-writers, and fried-potato sellers, especially the latter, because of the smoke. These stalls ought to be sordid, with incorrect, vulgarly-painted signs. The builders might be allowed to take stone from the monument itself, particularly at the corners; this would soften down the harsh outline. It would be desirable to fill up the holes resulting from these various depredations with a few spadefuls of earth, and plant beech-nuts and acorns. The beeches and oaks would spread

out their green branches at different heights, and so break the monotony of the grey surface; their roots, pushing down into the masonry, would cause most picturesque cracks. There would have to be a lot of ivy, but that tenacious plant would not fail us; it thrives on stonework. The wind and the birds would sow seeds of gilli-flowers, which love old walls, and a thousand other things in the dusty orifices. Saxifrage, eager for moisture, blackberries, and virginia creeper would spring up and multiply at random. The top of the edifice would be honeycombed with pigeons' nests; the swallows would plaster theirs under the vaulting; troops of crows, attracted by the dead dormice and field mice, would swoop down at nightfall. Thus, the Arc de Triomphe, if kept up with some sort of intelligent care, would be looked at by poets, copied by painters, and considered as a work of art. Waiter, another *bock*."

Night was falling. The artist and the thinker decided that they would not go any further, so they took the tram back to Montparnasse.

CHAPTER XII

ADAME LOURMEL and her daughter settled themselves in a little stone house with a thatched roof at a small unfrequented seaside place, a few miles from Avranches.

Remi, happy and intoxicated with the salt air, went off with his paint-box to a neighbouring fair. He had only fourteen francs seventy centimes left, but he had a pair of shoes.

Lines of carts were drawn up on the outskirts of the market-place. Under the trees there was a great assembly of red faces, fringed with fair beards, the rumps of calves plastered with dung, horned cattle, pink muzzles, shining haunches, and white caps. The squealing of pigs being taken out of carts was heard above every other sound of man or beast. Women, with cotton fichus and gold chains round their necks, stood stolidly in their straight skirts by the waggons, keenly watching over them, while the men, in full-plaited blue blouses, did business over a pot of cider in some *cabaret* full of flies.

Remi passed under the holly branch above the door, and sat down at one of the tables with his pen-

cil and paper. He made a sketch of a peasant, then another and another, then one of a group of peasants who were watching him. He said he would do the portrait of any one of them for a franc; but this offer did not loosen their purse-strings. "Go and get your sweethearts," he said; "I will draw them."

There was a murmur in the crowd, and three or four particularly jovial fellows pushed a bouncing girl in front of Remi. She was purple, almost violet, and she was laughing from ear to ear. Remi made a sketch of her, in which she could be recognised by her cap and her cross.

One of the jovial fellows pulled a franc out of a woollen stocking and handed it to the painter, then, neatly folding the picture in four, he tucked it under his smock.

The general opinion was that the Parisian could make a good likeness, and Remi went back with several pieces of silver in his pocket. He slept in the most rustic inn in the village, where Madame Lourmel had taken up her quarters, and appeared next day on the dazzling beach, where the striped bathing machines were drawn up in line.

The sea, blue on the horizon, was coming in slowly, breaking on the sand in oily green waves edged with foam. A soft damp sky, one of those treacherous skies which both caress and scorch the

tender skins of city dwellers, arched in the round horizon. Skinny women in bathing costumes, their hair in water-proof caps, were scurrying before the incoming waves. He saw Mademoiselle Lourmel; she was wearing a fluttering violet veil.

He wanted to throw his arms round her neck; but he caught sight of Monsieur Sarriette, with the same white whiskers and the same umbrella, coming down a little path to the shore.

"Good morning, Monsieur Sarriette," he said to the astonished old man.

At the end of a quarter of an hour they were great friends.

"I am very fond of old monuments," said Monsieur Sarriette, "and, believe me or not, I spent three weeks measuring all the walls of the Abbey on Saint-Michael's Mount. I have a way of my own of taking measurements—I use my umbrella. The average height of the Abbey ramparts is seventy-two umbrellas, and in the church the pillars of the nave measure no less than thirty-seven umbrellas, three handles, and two ferrules."

Monsieur Sarriette was delighted to hear that Remi was a painter. They arranged to explore the whole countryside together; Remi was to make sketches and Monsieur Sarriette was to measure the historical buildings.

"Present me to Madame Lourmel," said Remi.

"Monsieur Remi Sainte-Lucie, son of Monsieur Sainte-Lucie, a former Minister of Haïti," said the good man at this request.

Remi bowed low first to Madame Lourmel, who was dumb with astonishment, then to the girl, who opened her violet eyes widely and smiled with her flower-like mouth.

That evening Madame Lourmel and her daughter leaned at their window breathing the salt air and watching the moon rise over the sparkling sea.

"But, my dear child," said Madame Lourmel, "we know nothing about his family, or his fortune, or his mode of life."

"But, mamma, I love him," answered the girl, with the audacity of innocence.

"What do you mean, Jeanne? You know nothing about him," said the mother.

And Jeanne, whose beautiful eyes were shining with a slightly rebellious tenderness, answered:

"Perhaps I don't know him, but I know him again."

CHAPTER XIII

ONSIEUR ALIDOR SAINTE-LUCIE had been twelve hours in Paris and had not yet seen his son. He had looked for him at the railway station and waited in vain for him at the hotel. Remi's absence irritated him, his nerves were shaken by his long voyage, and in the peaceful bed at the hotel he could still feel the rolling of the ship and the oscillation of the express train. He awoke in a bad humour; the vague uneasiness of his limbs spread to his brain.

Lying back in a cab, jolted by the rough paving of the streets leading up to Montmarte, he thought with dissatisfaction of his son's education. Godet-Laterrasse did not appear to have troubled himself much about it. Four years had gone by and Remi had not taken his bachelor's degree. It was for such a result as this that he had chosen a poor but superior man as tutor. He had expected better things of Godet-Laterrasse, who spoke so eloquently and so austerely in political cafés.

The letters the man wrote him annoyed him; they were so indefinite and so hollow. He was furthermore furious with Remi for not coming to

the station to embrace him as he should have done. The smell of fried fish rose to his nostrils exasperatingly. The cab went slowly, drawn by a lean horse which, with a hanging head and a long tongue, offered its crupper to the whip. At last the cabman stopped without saying a word, and the hundred and sixty steps of the Passage Cotin rose steeply before the cab door. Monsieur Alidor, having alighted, handed the man a five-franc piece. The latter, pimply faced, huge and covered with dust, put it between his teeth without a word of explanation. Then followed a long mute comedy; the cabman turned his colossal body slowly on the seat, while he dived into one of his pockets from which he drew a bag. Then he stopped to survey his horse which shook convulsively, explored another pocket, urged his horse several paces forward to get out of the way of a waggon, from which there was not the slightest danger. Finally, he produced seven sous from the depths of his red waistcoat, and proffered them to his exasperated fare. It was all the change he had. Monsieur Alidor turned his back on him in a raging temper, and he drove away, grumbling and plying his whip.

The mulatto's irreproachable patent shoes cracked on the disjointed stones of the Passage Cotin as they climbed step by step the arduous way, which even in mid-summer was noxious and greasy. At

length, after slipping upon the viscous steps of the interior staircase, Monsieur Alidor tugged viciously at the deer's foot, which served as a bell-pull at the mouldy doorway. After waiting several minutes the door opened cautiously, and a head, enveloped in a multi-coloured handkerchief, peeped out. The superior man, aroused from a profound sleep, had only had time to slip into a pair of trousers spattered all over with mud of long standing. The room smelt of damp tobacco; a greenish light, nearly exhausted by the numerous indirect channels it traversed painfully, filtered through the dirty window. Political caricatures were pinned on the walls, the washing-stand was covered with tattered, unbound volumes, and a piece of soap, a comb, and half a roll of bread lay among the manuscripts and dictionaries on the writing-table. These things spoke so plainly of habits of sloth and disorder, that after one glance round the room, Sainte-Lucie felt he knew the tutor as well as if he had followed him from café to café for twenty years. The unfortunate creole tried to make up for the ignominy of his dwelling by the extreme dignity of his bearing.

"Excuse me," he said to the former minister, "for receiving you in the disordered cell of a modern anchorite." Then he added, drawing himself up, "We are the Benedictines of the nineteenth century." And he tried to smuggle into his pockets

the combs and the crusts of bread which disfigured the table.

Sainte-Lucie had the sense to recognise that he had deceived himself, but had not been deceived. For the matter of that, how could Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse deceive any one? The poor, little, dirty lizard of a man was pitiful to behold, but if there was one sentiment foreign to Sainte-Lucie's soul, it was pity. And that he had only himself to blame, made him the less forgiving to the innocent tutor. In his anger he bit his lips, and his eyes grew sombre, but it pleased him for the moment to dissimulate. His gentle voice took on an accent which was almost caressing as he said:

"My dear Godet, forgive me for having surprised you in your bed" (here he threw a terrible glance at the object he politely named *a bed*). "You are the first person I have called on. We will go now and surprise Remi. I wrote to tell him of my arrival, but he did not trouble himself to meet me. I'll pull his ears for him."

At these words a shiver of terror shook the frame of the tutor, who however far he threw his head back still looked up into the tall mulatto's enigmatical face.

He tried to smile, and stammered out something about having given Remi a holiday for the day, and that he had no doubt gone into the country with his

friends. The wretched man thus gained a day's respite; he spent it in researches which only tired him without resulting in any discovery.

By eight o'clock the next morning Monsieur Sainte-Lucie was again in the anchorite's cell, which the Benedictine of the nineteenth century had tidied up a little. He himself wore a white necktie, and that stoical expression which rendered him so remarkable on ceremonial occasions. It was not only fear of Soulouque's former minister which troubled him. He had but small credit in Bather's Alley, and as he did not possess a franc in the world he was in a fix. The two hundred francs which the consul of Haïti remitted to him regularly every month went mostly in paying old debts to various tradesmen, for he was honest; what remained never lasted long. He loved to throw money about, and now he did not possess a franc. His misery, as he followed Sainte-Lucie, was so excessive it blinded him, made him giddy and little by little indifferent as to what might happen. The mulatto's voice ordering the cabman to drive to the Rue des Feuillantines brought him to his senses, and he endeavoured to postpone the climax for a few hours.

"Dear sir," he said, "we shall be more likely to find Remi in the afternoon, at the time for our lessons."

The sly, suspicious Sainte-Lucie felt that something was being hidden from him, but it afforded him a kind of pleasure to pile up grievances in his memory, so he replied with perfect good nature:

"Very well; we will go to breakfast. You must be hungry, Monsieur Godet."

They breakfasted in a café on the boulevard. The tutor ate little, and fearfully watched his huge companion devouring the mass of food that his bulk demanded. The man had never seemed to him so broad and so tall. Enormous muscular bronze arms were visible through the Haïtian's cuffs with their gold links. He talked in a voice which was almost childishly gentle, and the twinkling of his cruel eyes was softened by the lashes he lowered so trustingly. And that trustfulness added to the tutor's anguish.

The breakfast dragged on to liqueurs and cigars, but finish it did at last; then a waiter called a cab, and parent and tutor started for the Rue des Feuillantines.

Nothing but a miracle could save him now, and Godet half expected, by the intervention of Providence, to find Remi in his room, "digging away at Tacitus."

The landlady of the hotel dashed his hopes to the ground with her first word.

"Monsieur Remi has not come back," she said; "you ought to inform the police."

Monsieur Alidor folded his arms and turned towards the tutor. The colour of his face was unchanged, but his lips were white and his eyes bloodshot.

"Where is he?" he hissed through his closed teeth. "You are responsible for him."

He stretched out his powerful hand and grasped the tutor's arm, who, as the earth did not open beneath him, flung back his head and contemplated the staircase. Even in his downfall he was sublime. Sainte-Lucie, looking around, saw rows of brass candlesticks on a shelf, beneath which hung keys each bearing a numbered tag and a spirit merchant's advertisement. These things bore witness to European civilisation. Had he instead of them seen a sandy plain, the abrupt sides of a deep ravine, or the palm-trees of his native island, he would in all probability have given way to his desire to strangle the tutor. He abstained from so doing, out of respect for European manners, and contented himself with saying:

"I shall not leave you until you have found him."

Then began a series of drives in cabs to such places as Godet-Laterrasse could suggest. He dined with the mulatto in sumptuous restaurants, ate of succulent dishes, and received the obsequious

smiles of waiters. In the evening he mounted the thickly carpeted staircase of Sainte-Lucie's hotel, the inordinately elongated shadow of his inevitable companion mounting by his side. He was shown into a fine bedroom, and heard the key turn in the lock behind him. When the door opened next morning, it would be for him to resume his life of painful splendour.

There was always a cab waiting for them in the street, which took them on an unceasing round the whole day through. They drove to "The Famished Cat," where Virginie assured the father of the lively interest she took in his son.

She had often mended Monsieur Remi's linen, she said. She would have gone to the stake for him. She was not like so many women one sees about. "Go and look in the Morgue," she added with a sigh.

She dived into her kitchen, and reappeared a moment later, her eyes screwed up and her nose red, and in her hand a bill which Monsieur Remi had not settled.

She profited too by the occasion to remind Monsieur Godet that he also owed her for sundry *bocks*. But the man of iron had forgotten his purse. Besides, he had given up the struggle; his ambulatory prison exhausted him. He was dragged from "The Famished Cat" to Labanne's studio. The sculptor

stroked his ruddy beard and declared that he did not as yet "see" the expiatory monument to the Victims of Tyranny, but that he was studying the flora of the Antilles. He showed Monsieur Sainte-Lucie an easel, already half buried under a pile of books.

"That was Remi's easel," he said; "the young scoundrel was beginning to paint as dexterously as a monkey."

"Is my son a painter?" exclaimed Sainte-Lucie.

Then with a gesture which was now familiar to him, he hoisted the tutor into the cab which was waiting.

They went to the prefecture of police; they went to see Dion, who was busy writing a poem. On the wall hung a pair of crossed foils, and a death's-head, wearing a mask fringed with lace, ornamented his bookcase.

They went to see Mercier, who was living with a high-coloured, formidably built dame—a *sage-femme* by profession.

They explored the deepest depths of Batignolles till they found Potrel painting in his studio. They went to see a young lady called Marie, and a young lady called Louise, who were very playful with the former minister and called him "papa." One day, after an extra good breakfast, Godet-Laterrasse, seeing the cab already waiting to carry him off,

asked if he might at least be allowed to go to his apartment to get a clean shirt and some socks. Sainte-Lucie, without answering him, ordered the cabman to stop at the first hosier's he came to.

That same day they went to visit Télémaque. It was the first time that Miragoane had seen a cab stop at her master's door, and she greeted it by barking furiously. When Télémaque saw Soulouque's former minister get out of it, he was seized with respect and terror.

"That you, Massa Sainte-Lucie?" were the only words he could say, though his mouth remained open, and he cast furtive glances towards the cab, fearful lest the Emperor himself should be hidden in it. Once reassured on this point, he smiled widely at Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, and went down into the cellar in search of bottled beer.

During his absence Sainte-Lucie examined the portrait, which in its gilded frame hung over the counter.

"Isn't it fine, massa? isn't it really beautiful?" said the negro, his head appearing above the trapdoor, on a level with the floor. "It is your son, massa, who painted it. Massa Remi, he is a sorcerer."

The father turned two venomous eyes towards the tutor and said nothing.

When Télémaque learned from the former

minister of Remi's disappearance, he pondered for a long time. His half-closed eyes, like those of a cat dropping off to sleep, seemed to interrogate those of Miragoane. Finally he shook his head, and said with religious gravity:

"Massa, it is love which has carried away the young man. Young men are moved by love, and agitated, as Brother Voodoo is agitated when he dances on the serpent's cage. There is something good about an old woman who knows how to cook: but there is something good, too, about a pretty young girl."

Here Télémaque held his peace.

"Do you know where my son is?" asked Monsieur Sainte-Lucie.

"Yes, massa," replied Télémaque; "he is where the young lady is."

When he was asked where was the young lady of whom he spoke, he replied, with an infantine smile:

"I don't know, massa."

And nothing more could be got out of him, so Sainte-Lucie bundled the tutor with his packet of shirts and socks back into the cab, and conjured Télémaque to let him know anything he could find out about Remi.

CHAPTER XIV

TÉLÉMAQUE was dressed in his best black clothes, in which he looked so respectable that the waiter at the hotel unhesitatingly showed him up the main staircase.

"Good morning, massa," he said to Monsieur Alidor, whom he found arrayed in a pink sleeping suit. "I know where Massa Remi is; he where the young lady is, and the young lady is at the seaside, at Avranches."

He then explained that, having several times noticed the young man was much interested in Monsieur Sarriette, his landlord at Courbevoie, he thought that perhaps it might be because of something to do with a young lady. The butcher's wife and the baker's wife had both told him that Monsieur Sarriette, who received few visitors, was the guardian of a girl who had lost her father, and lived with her mother in the Rue des Feuillantines. Every one said the young lady was very pretty. Hearing further that Monsieur Sarriette had gone to join his ward at a little village near Avranches, Télémaque felt quite sure that Massa Remi had gone to Avranches too. He declared that Brother

Joseph the prophet could not have divined things better, even though he had first danced on his serpent's cage.

Monsieur Sainte-Lucie went at once to fetch the tutor from his prison. He was beginning to get used to his well-fed and stupefying life, and merely looked at the ceiling with the air of a poodle and a martyr, which he could so affectingly assume when, with cruel irony, he was ordered to pack his trunks. A waiter was sent out to buy him some handkerchiefs, and soon, seated beside the mulatto, he was in the train going to Normandy. The two travellers spent the night at Avranches.

The next day, while the morning sun shone on the bay, turning its sands to silver, and showing up the brown crenellated buildings on Saint Michael's Mount, Sainte-Lucie dragged Godet-Laterrasse to the omnibus which was to take them to the little bathing-place. He took his place in the *coupé,* and put his prisoner under the tilt, where he was squeezed between two packing-cases, the corners of which stuck into his sides. As soon as they reached the village, Sainte-Lucie locked his victim up in a bedroom in the hotel.

The landlady of the inn, being interrogated, told him that Monsieur Remi with his paint-box, accompanied by Monsieur Sarriette, had gone to the cliffs, and there, sure enough, after a ten minutes'

walk, Monsieur Alidor found his son tranquilly sketching the rocks. The father wanted to beat him with his walking-stick, and at the same time hug him to his heart. He was still undecided which desire to satisfy when Remi saw him, and, springing up, threw his arms round his neck.

He was no longer the great sulky boy whom his father had left four years ago; he was a robust, well-grown young fellow, good-humoured and wide awake, with an honest, smiling face.

"How glad I am that you have come, papa," he said, "I was just going to write to you. This is Monsieur Sarriette—let me present him to you; he will introduce you to Madame and Mademoiselle Lourmel."

Monsieur Sarriette left off measuring the cliff with his umbrella and bowed.

That evening, beneath an innumerable cohort of stars, Monsieur Alidor Sainte-Lucie, adorned with all his creole airs and graces, offered his arm to Madame Lourmel, and led her for a stroll along the beach.

Remi walked by the side of Jeanne, and noted the blue shadows her long lashes cast on her rounded cheeks. She raised her eyes, cool as violets steeped in dew, to the young man, and a ray of moonlight shone on her pretty teeth as she said:

"Mamma could not understand—she could not

understand a bit—why you should travel in the same train with us, without a hat, too, and in your slippers and jersey. But I knew quite well that it was because you wanted to marry me."

When Monsieur Alidor found himself alone with his son, he said in a half-scolding, half-tender tone:

"She is a very nice girl. You don't deserve such a nice girl. It was wrong of me not to tell Madame Lourmel the kind of life you have been leading in Paris, you young scamp. Well, anyhow, do you think you know how to paint?"

Then all of a sudden he struck his forehead.

"I have left that fool of a Godet locked up all this time in his room!" he cried.

THE END

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